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2013



COMMENT

So it's nearing midnight on October 31 and I'm sat here at DBR Towers with The Bear and Hector the Halloween Tangerine wondering what the hell I'm gonna write this column about. The daft thing is I've been waiting for this moment for what feels like frickin' ages and now it's finally here and it's my time to shine my head is chuffin' empty.

The last few months of my life can only be defined as weird. Shortly after the Hawkstone Park Maxxis round my body had some kind of catastrophic meltdown and I had to take a couple of months out. This basically meant I missed a large slice of the summer and events like the British GP, the Ken Hall Trophy and a whole heap of Red Bull Pro Nationals. The good news is – for me at least – I'm now back at it and I'm feeling okay.

During my time off one thing became clear and that's just how important the people you have around you actually are – whether they be friends, family, workmates or even just people you considered to be acquaintances but stepped up and proved to be something more. I basically want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped me through what was – at times – a very difficult time. So, erm, thanks everybody!

Okay, so now I've done that emo sh*t to death let's crack on. It's an exciting time here at DBR Towers and I'm seriously pumped about what the future holds. The team we have working on the magazine at present is already fairly awesome and we're adding more awesomeness all the time. You're gonna see some big changes in the next few months – both

in print and online – and I'm pretty positive you'll be as pleased with them as I am to be putting them in place.

By the time this issue hits the shelves the International Dirt Bike Show will be in full swing – and that's always a dangerous time. While motocross racers run the risk of getting wanged wrists, shafted shoulders and knackered knees there's something lurking at the show that's a million times more dangerous. I'm talking about 'show breath'.

Now, I'm no scientist or owt but I'm figuring there's some kind of formula – involving hangovers, coffee, talking lots and breathing in dry air – that plays havoc with moto-folk's mouths and leaves them rather rancid. What I've noticed over the years is that the old pros at the show game will always carry a packet of gum or mints with them so if someone offers you a Polo or some Wrigley's then please take the hint...

I actually love show season – regardless of the aforementioned risk – because it's quite often the last chance for the racers, fans and industry folk to all get together before the next race season begins. And because it's a no stress situation people tend let their hair down, get a little sideways and as a result stronger relationships are quite often forged. Good times.

I'm gonna be at both the Dirt Bike Show and Motorcycle Live so if you get chance pop over and say hi. But if you do then please remember to bring me a mint because I'll most likely need it...

Sully

For no other reason than there's nobody here to stop me here's Wakker chasing me with his chopper. Laff!



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Elliott Banks-Browne ponders what his celebration t-shirt might look like...



NEWS UND!

AN ECLECTIC MIX OF MOTOCROSS MADNESS, NUBILE NEWS, OFF-ROAD OFFAL AND DIRT BIKE DIRIGIBLES...

If you weren't at Little Silver for the last round of the Maxxis you definitely missed out as the race action came thick and fast all day and the weather was way better than the shifty forecast n'all. Unless you're one of those folk who stays away from the internet, avoids TMX like the plague and shouts 'la la la, I can't hear you' every time anyone tries to tell you the results from a certain race because you wanna read all about it in DBR then you'll already know that Kevin Strijbos and Elliott Banks-Browne were crowned champions in a day of drama down in Devon. If you didn't... surprise!

While it's no real shock that the Belgian star took the MX1 title, nobody – HM Plant KTM UK team included – really figured that EBB would turn the tables on Mel Pocock. I say that the team didn't really expect it because while they had loads of 'Strijbos is champ' tees they had exactly zero to celebrate Elliott's victory. I wonder if anyone from Roger Magee's camp actually had the balls to say 'we always knew you could do it' to him later?

The daft thing is you can almost

guarantee that the Monster Energy Yamaha team took home box after unopened box of tees celebrating what would have been Mel's maiden title. But, that's the way the cookie crumbles and as Steve Cox would say – 'it's why they run the races'.

I was lucky enough to bump into Josh Coppins in Devon and the Lizzard looked pumped to be hanging out with his family rather than racing. Now at the end of an illustrious career the New Zealander is looking forward to doing some development work with Yamaha and that's about it. Definitely one of the most approachable guys around if you get the chance to stop and chat with JC you have to do it – the guy talks a lot of sense and has a wicked sense of humour.

One thing I quizzed him about was what he thought on the subject of Brad Ando's form – or lack thereof. I honestly expected a highly motivated Brad to come back and challenge for the win but whether it was a bit of jetlag or simply unfamiliarity with the PAR Honda that slowed him down, he didn't come close to meeting my expectations.

'He's about where I thought he'd be,' said Josh nonchalantly. 'He started the year pretty strong but he's not been on the podium at all in the second half of the season so I didn't expect him to come here and beat Strijbos or Simpson.'

Anderson can now concentrate fully on winning next year when he'll be racing for Steve James' LPE Maxxis Henderson Kawasaki squad. The crazy thing is there's actually not that much time to prepare for next season as it'll be here sooner than you'd think.

With the opening grand prix of 2013 now happening one week earlier – and under floodlights in Qatar on March 2 rather than by the beach in Thailand on March 10 – the knock-on effect is that all the pre-season internationals have had to be pushed forwards too. For us that means the Hawkstone International will now go off on February 10 – the date Events 22 are also running the final round of their exciting new Arenacross UK series.

While to a certain degree the Hawkstone promoter's hands are tied – Valence was always gonna be February

16/17 and it's looking likely that Mantova will be February 3 or even earlier – I can't help but feel a little bit sorry for Matt Bates and the E22 crew who have been pushing their fresh four-round series for the past month or so in the mainstream media as well as in the off-road world.

But will a clash even matter? At the end of the day if the riders are gonna register for the Arenacross championship then they're gonna register for all four rounds – not just the one that clashes with the 'Winternational' – and with indoor championship titles on the line they're bound to sack off Hawkstone so they can chase the MCF money. And who can blame them? I'd honestly question the value the Shropshire classic holds for our domestic championship chasers now the first round of the Maxxis isn't happening until over a month later. Oh yeah, the FatCat Maxxis season opener is now gonna be on March 17 rather than March 3 as originally planned.

On to saner stuff now and the Scott time and observation trial which was won by Michael Brown for the >>



MAC211

SEVENTH HEAVEN?

BILLY MAKES A BLUNDER DOWN UNDER BUT BOUNCES BACK TO SCORE A DECENT RESULT IN THE AUSSIE SX SEASON OPENER...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Matty Muir

Things are looking like they're coming full circle for me right now and I'm officially without a Kawasaki deal for next year which was actually pretty predictable. After an injury filled season and with two roosters in the hen cage it was inevitable that one of us would have to go.

Kawasaki already cut the budgets after missing out on yet another motocross championship and after only posting seventh at the opening round of the supercross series I got the call to say it wasn't going ahead for 2013. Fair is fair I guess - I've been with Kawasaki for three years now and not won a championship so it's time for a change and the change is looking pretty positive!

Nothing can be said just yet because it's not a done deal but if there were to be one team in the paddock that I'd want to ride for... well, I'm hoping it will be me riding for them. So fingers crossed and I hope I can give you all the good news soon.

The opening round of the supercross went okay. I enjoyed the track and it didn't take me as long as usual to get into the flow of things and to do all the jumps and even though my qualifying times were bad my race pace was okay.

As I sat behind the gate before the final I was feeling confident and told myself it was all or nothing. There was a small rhythm section straight after the first turn and I decided that if I were in the top three off the start then I would double into the second corner.

The gate dropped and I was third holding a tight inside line. Matt Moss had holeshot with Jay

Marmont on the outside. Matt didn't double into the corner but instead turned on the landing of the double. Having already committed it was inevitable that we came together and we both went down. He came off worst with a dislocated shoulder and I remounted in last place.

My front brake was knocked up further than David Vuillemin's and I had to resort to my schoolboy technique of using just the back brake - which actually worked out pretty well! I got going and started picking people off, I had an alright pace but was still a little hesitant. I got back to seventh place by the finish and was happy with how I rode but I know I can do even better and chase the podium with a decent start.

The incident with Mossy obviously wasn't deliberate but understandably he came and had words after the race. I let him say his piece, then told him my story and we kinda both knew it was a racing incident. However, I had his old man fold his sunglasses and put them on the table while standing next to Matt. He was staring me down and it all looked like it was gonna kick off before Matt dragged him away!

So although there is a lot going on right now I can't really tell you any more because I just don't have the real info right now. I'm sure next month I'll be able to share my new colours...

BD 12/11




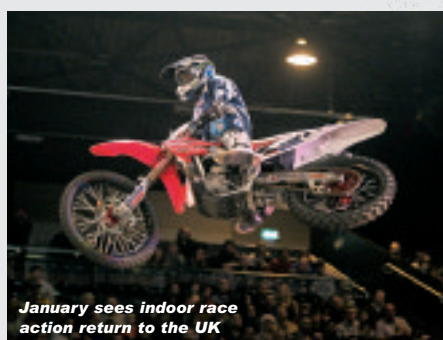
first time ever in his illustrious career. Brown's always been demon fast on a trials bike and not surprisingly set standard time. He also put in a decent score on observation to take a well deserved win ahead of Dougie Lampkin who had best observation score but dropped 22 marks on time due to a bust back brake - allegedly!

The last man to cross the line within the time limit (two and a half hours after the standard time setter) was former British MX champ Gordon Crockard who had carb troubles all day, ran out of gas twice and had to push across the line with a dry tank. The Ulsterman was eventually credited with a 69th place finish - good work GC!

In transfer news it looks like Adam Sterry's signed to STR KTM for his attack on the EMX-250 championship in 2013. The schoolboy who'll sit his GCSE's next summer joins Matiss Karro and Jonathan Barragan in Steve Turner's privately funded team. That of course means there's no room for Nez Parker who won't confirm it but I suspect is off to that brand-new team on the UK scene - Revo/MX Workshopbenchholdingdevice Kawasaki.

"I just want to thank Steve and the team for the last five years," said Nez. "It's been such a good experience and I wouldn't be where I am now without his support. I wish him good luck in the future with his world championship aspirations and I would also like to thank all our sponsors over the years especially Stu from NME - for all his hard work on the engines and suspension. I'm really looking forward to racing full-time in the UK next year and I'm keen to show everyone what I can do." Apparently one thing he can't do is answer his phone - but that's another story.

Another shock departee of the STR team is head technician Ben Lightbown who's worked with Steve on that project from the off. One of the hardest working spanner-spinners in the country, Ben will now be working with Nev Bradshaw over at DB Racing Honda. That could be a match made in heaven. I guess we'll have to wait and see... 



January sees indoor race action return to the UK

HOT DATES!

ARENACROSS UK SERIES

January 12	The O2, London
January 19	Odyssey Arena, Belfast
February 2	LG Arena, Birmingham
February 10	Echo Arena, Liverpool

MAXXIS BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP

March 17	FatCat Motoparc, South Yorkshire
March 24	Canada Heights, Kent
April 7	Lyng, Norfolk
May 12	Milton Park, Northamptonshire
June 2	TBA, TBA
June 23	Desertmartin, Northern Ireland
August 11	Hawkstone Park, Shropshire
October 6	Farleigh Castle, Wiltshire



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

THIS ETNIES TWO-TWO MOTORSPORTS CASUAL CLOTHING PACKAGE MUST BE WON...

Aussie SX legend Chad Reed was already a hero to millions but when he set up his own team – that there Two-Two Motorsports jobbywotsit – at the start of 2011 his popularity burst through the stratosphere! To celebrate the awesomeness of the Thunder from Down Under and his speedy band of brothers aka the Two-Two Motorsports Team, badass clothing company Etnies have released this pants-fillingly awesome range of swag that's available now in the UK thanks to the gert lush gods of online enterprise known simply as the www.freestylextreme.com crew.

Because they is good old boys and that, the Frizzle Extrasizzle collective have hooked us up with a prize package that's so awesome that we literally pat our shants when we saw it. Basically, one lucky winner is gonna walk away with two hoodys (one black, one grey), two caps (one grey, one black) and a long-sleeve tee (black not grey) that are all pimped to the max in a Two-Two Motorsports stylee.

To be in with a chance of winning this hot pile of Two-Two Motorsports love we need you to answer this stupendously easy question.

What is Chad Reed's chosen career race number?

Is it: A: 222
B: 2
C: 22
D: Batfink

If you think you know the answer log on to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competitions link in **dirtZone** or use your smartphone to scan this funky **QR code** which'll take you right there. The competition closes on **December 6** when the first correct answer randomly drawn from the DBR dishwasher of death by The Bear's poorly paw will win the owner of it – that's the hand-picked correct entry – this simply preposterous and oh-so peachy prize!

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YAKETY YAK

NAME CHANGE!

THE ATHLETE FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE REVEREND NOW WANTS TO BE CALLED YAK – BECAUSE THAT'S THE WAY THOSE CRAZY WAFFLE EATING BELGIANS PRONOUNCE JAKE APPARENTLY. GOT IT? GOOD...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

Well my 2012 season is finally over. It was a long year of racing as the first race I attended was on February 19 at Valence and my last race was on October 21. That's a long time for an athlete to try and perform at his best week in week out with not so many breaks.

I got a few weekends off this year though which made a change and was actually quite nice – mainly because of the strange schedule that the Dutch championship runs. The penultimate round was in the middle of May and the final round was my final race of the season.

I must say the Dutch series has impressed me this year and it was good preparation for the first GP at Valkenswaard as we had the first four rounds one after the other in March followed by a weekend off before the GP. It's a very tough championship for a rider like myself who finds hardpack tracks much more natural to ride than the sand. It was a great learning curve for me though and to finish the championship second was pretty cool. Okay, my team-mate should have been second as he was 10 points clear of me before the last round but decided to get his nagging shoulder injury fixed which meant he gifted me the runner-up spot. Thanks Glenn!

The big rumour in Belgium last week was how it's looking likely that the fifth GP in 2013 will be at Hawkstone – that would be amazing if it's true. I just hope they don't let Youthstream get too loose in the bulldozers and ruin the track.

My off-season officially started yesterday and it feels nice to do nothing after spending all season watching what I eat, not eating as much as I would like, training, working out how to go faster, stressing about the following weekend, travelling, stressing about bike set-up and missing home as well as missing out on having a drink with friends. I know some riders don't worry about that but I really enjoy it and always look forward to my month of no worries.

It's funny because whenever I have a bad race all I think about is what I am going to do in the off season. I make huge plans in my brain about how I'm going to go here and do this or that but when I eventually arrive on my couch at home and the season's over it's always a bit like 'hmmm, I don't feel like doing a lot' and the big plans slowly slip away as I realise I'm over travelling and I don't really want to go anywhere.

I can't do any exercise as I'm ordered to have a month of rest so I stay at home and enjoy home comforts. One of the nicest things for me is being able to not have to worry about getting the right amount of sleep. I'm naturally a terrible sleeper so now I stay up

until past midnight and then get up whenever I like. This morning I woke up at seven and didn't have to worry about trying to get back to sleep so I just got up. I feel tired now but I might have a nap in the afternoon as I won't have a lot else to do.

I feel like I should touch on the subject of our poor MXDN result. First of all I would like to thank all the fans who outnumbered all the other nations by a mile and even after our poor performance were still making as much noise as ever. Secondly I would like to thank Neil Prince who was a great team manager and I'm sorry for him that we couldn't achieve our targeted podium.

It was a strange weekend for me and I was so confident coming into the race having rode Lommel more than any other track this year. My bike was running real good but my poor performance was completely down to a lack of form – by form I mean my physical and mental condition on the bike.

My trainer and I aimed for my form to peak at the British GP – which it did – and from there it was a steady down slope. You can't do anything about it and I trained just as hard as ever but the form was now dropping and it was evident at the penultimate GP where I sucked. I pulled myself together for the final GP but that was the final straw and I just didn't have any go in me at Lommel which I'm very sad about. But as I said earlier it's such a long season and to stay on top throughout is the toughest thing in our sport and that's what makes the champions.

I could never do the US style of racing where they have two weeks off then go straight into the outdoors after their supercross season. I know they have shorter races and it's all on one day but still I feel like I need time off to relax and be a normal person. That said, I don't think there's much natural about some of the top yanks – their drug tests are even more pathetic than the ones in the GPs. Do you know I've been racing the world championship since 2007 and I haven't been tested once – that's disgusting in my opinion. Still it's only a wee test so most good doctors could get around that no problem. I will leave it at that I think.

My mechanic Olly left me last week to go and work for old baldy – Blake Baggett. It's a shame he left but not many would turn down a chance to work for Pro Circuit. He never told me until it was a done deal though so I was a bit disappointed but still we had a great year and I wish him all the best.

Thanks for reading – keep updated on my Twitter @Jakenicholls45...

RED ROCKETS!

HONDA AND YOUTHSTREAM ANNOUNCE A NEW ONE-MAKE SERIES FOR RISING TALENT...

Honda and Youthstream have hooked up to give youngsters aged 11 to 14 the awesome opportunity to join a one-make race series that'll run alongside some of the GPs next season. Basically, by buying into the Honda 150 Championship all riders will have to do is turn up and race because Honda will supply, prepare and transport all the race machinery used. Racers will also receive coaching so it seems like the perfect pyramid plan for discovering young talent – sort of like the Red Bull Rookies Cup does for Moto GP!

"This is an exciting time for Honda as we make the next step in our plan to grow young talent," reckons Honda Motor Europe's Off-Road manager Roger Harvey. "This is a great opportunity for youngsters to compete on grand prix tracks from a young age while learning how to race a four-stroke bike which is in synergy with the MX1 and MX2 series at the highest level. We will be offering mentoring and coaching to the riders along with an easily accessible chance to race on similar machinery so competition should be fierce and totally down to rider ability."

The series sounds great in theory but still leaves one important question unanswered – what kind of 'tache is Roger gonna rock for November? You can register your interest in the series at www.honda150championship.com/register...

STRIJBOS SIGNS FOR SUZUKI!

THE BRITISH MX1 CHAMP HEADS BACK TO HIS SPIRITUAL HOME...

Recently crowned British champion Kevin Stribos hopes it's gonna be third time lucky as he joins Sylvain Geboers' factory Suzuki squad once more for an attack on the MX1 world championship in 2013. Believe it or not it'll be 10 years since Stribos first plied his trade for Sylvain's squad – the team where he historically has had his best results.

"Going back to the team really feels like home. I know the people, the place and the way they work," says Stribos. "I've had an awesome year and I feel like I still have plenty to offer. I have proved in the past that I get on well with the bike and did okay last year when stepping in for Steve. For sure I hope it will be third time lucky!"

STAR SIGNINGS!

A FEW MORE RIDERS ANNOUNCE THEIR PLANS FOR 2013...

The Motocross des Nations seemed to be as good a place as any to announce rider signings and more than a few teams announced who'd be lining up for them in next year's 18-round series. Kimi Raikkonen's Ice1 squad upgrade from washed up Dutchman Marc de Reuver (we love you really Marc) to French hero Xavier Boog who you may remember won a moto at the Brazilian GP back in May. Another winner of a Latin-American moto who has put pen to paper for 2013 is '08 MX1 champ David Philippaerts who will ride with the Honda Gariboldi-ESTA team that Max Anstie struggled with all year.

It's also certain that Joel Roelants will join Steven Frossard at Monster Energy Yamaha, Jermey van Horebeek is at KRT in MX1 while Alessandro Lupino and Arnaud Tonus will pick up where Tommy Searle left off at CLS Kawasaki. MVR-D Honda also make a return to the GPs next year with Jason Dougan and Tanel Leok on board Honda machinery.

Glenn Coldenhoff's out at Nestaan JM Racing KTM and Yak – that's the athlete formerly known as The Reverend aka Jake Nicholls – will be joined by Romain Febvre next year. The young Frenchman's rise through the ranks is amazing considering he was concentrating on supermoto until last year.

Loisal in Qatar will host the opening MXGP of 2013 under the very same floodlights that illuminate the Moto GP race each year. Excited? We are...

SERIES SCHEDULE

2013 FIM MX WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

March 2	Losail, Qatar
March 10	Si Racha, Thailand
April 1	Valkenswaard, the Netherlands
April 14	Arco di Trento, Italy
April 21	TBA, TBA
May 5	TBA, Portugal
May 19	Belo Carrero, Brazil
May 26	Guadalajara, Mexico
June 9	Ernee, France
June 16	Maggiore, Italy
June 30	Uddevalla, Sweden
July 7	Kegums, Latvia
July 14	Semigorie, Russia
July 28	Lausitzring, Germany
August 4	Loket, Czech Republic
August 18	Bastogne, Belgium
August 25	Matterley Basin, Great Britain
September 9	TBA, TBA

MXDN

September 29 Teutschenthal, Germany

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, ACTION!

THE FLOODLIT SEASON OPENER IN QATAR IS FINALLY CONFIRMED...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photo by motogp.com

The 2013 GP season will definitely launch under the lights of Losail in Qatar before heading to Thailand for the most exotic beginning to the world championship ever.

As the '13 calendar continues to go through a period of evolution – there are still several TBA slots to be filled – it was curious to hear some rumours about a second British round possibly entering the schedule with

Hawkstone Park being one of the names mentioned along with another mysterious new site in Wales.

Recent visitors to both Hawkstone and a grand prix will recognise the impracticality of the FIM series trying to squeeze itself into the Shropshire circuit. The black sandy layout itself will also need a major overhaul and facelift to again consider itself ready for a grand prix.

The power of nostalgia should not

be overestimated though and in the middle of October the cream of Italian motocross – that's Cairoli, Philippaerts and a couple more pasta blasters – visited Maggiore to ride and check up on the work being done to the mythical venue in preparation for the Italian round of the series on June 16. "They have done a good job," reckons fast Tony. "Even though the track is not grand prix ready yet it's technical and fast. It's very nice."



DP19 gives Maggiore a double thumbs up!



WHEEL OF FORTUNE!

WHERE WILL WOODY FIND A RIDE FOR 2013 – KTM OR TM?

One of the consequences – or intentions – of the 23 year age rule for the MX2 class in the world championship is to funnel all the best and developed talent into MX1 creating a true premier class. It means a real degree of cut-and-thrust and Darwin-esque survival of the fittest has been applied. For some riders the prospect of unemployment is dangerously close.

One individual to have fallen through the gaps of teams readjusting their budgets for 2013 is Shaun Simpson who at the age of 24 is a former British and Belgian champion and a top 10 runner in the MX1 category. Shaun is of course familiar to most of us but is currently sweating on an arrangement that could see him replace Kevin Strijbos and rejoin Roger Magee in the HM Plant KTM UK set-up – where he gained the British MX2 crown in 2008 – or take up the saddle for the

TM factory.

Perhaps unfairly considered a graveyard for riders in the grand prix paddock the TM is by no means a write-off as Tanel Leok proved in 2011 by taking the bike to a top three race finish. The squad has drawn sponsorship from the Czech Bonvers Casino Group for the past three years and while Simpson might feel slightly out on a limb by veering away from the Japanese machinery that's favoured by the majority of the racing fraternity the Scot will not suffer through a lack of support by becoming the focal point of the Pesaro factory's efforts.

In truth there are few other options available to stay in the international spotlight. Simpson's short term destiny could well be known by the time this issue hits the shelves but the worrying thing is that he's not alone and at the moment significant names like Rui Goncalves are also still on the shelf.



Woody yanks the holey

WINNER TAKES ALL!

THE MAXXIS SERIES BOILS DOWN TO A FINAL MOTO FLING AS ELLIOTT BANKS-BROWNE AND MEL POCOCK DUKE IT OUT FOR MX2 HONOURS...

Words and photos by Suttty

There's just one point separating Mel Pocock and Elliott Banks-Browne as they enter the final Maxxis MX2 championship moto of the year and tensions are high. The severity of the situation is vastly exasperated by the fact the last race is also a mixed-capacity moto and then made even worse by a delayed start due to a start gate malfunction...

Of course it should never have been this tight with Pocock starting the day 16 points clear of EBB. But that all changed early in moto one as Pocock's bike ground to a halt for the first time this season while Elliott charged to victory on his KTM. With Pocock's advantage turned into a nine point deficit, Mel's suddenly on the back foot for the first time since Milton Park.

Things soon turn back in the Euro champ's favour though as EBB crashes hard in moto two and has to bump start his bike as he damages the electric-start button when he hits terra firma. With Pocock powering to victory and Banks-Browne relegated back to sixth the outcome of the last moto of the year will decide things one way or another.

And when the gate actually does drop for the final race Elliott yanks the holey and makes a run for it while Mel sits mired in the pack with six fire breathing 450s and Jamie Law's 350 between himself and the man he needs to beat. Although the Monster Energy Yamaha rider charges hard he's only able to elevate himself to fifth by race end and with EBB second – even after a final lap tip over – the title is his.

"Coming into the weekend I knew there was the possibility that I could win the championship but I never thought it would actually happen," says an elated Banks-Browne. "I'm so happy but it hasn't really sunk in yet!"

It's not just Banks-Browne and Pocock who trade places though as all top six riders in the championship leave Little Silver with a different series ranking than what they arrive with. Irn Bry MacKenzie makes the biggest move as he leaps from fifth to third while Graeme Irwin claims fourth ahead of a struggling Nev Bradshaw and Steven Lenoir who slips back to sixth.

Things are far less complicated in MX1 where Kevin Strijbos wraps up the title in race one by finishing second behind Shaun Simpson who goes on to take the overall win with a 1-2-1 scorecard. That's also enough to cement Woody's second place in the series ahead of MVR-D Honda's Gert Krestinov, the missing Matiss Karro and Jamie Law who beats Martin Barr in their battle for fifth.

FINAL STANDINGS

MX1

1	Kevin Strijbos	530
2	Shaun Simpson	477
3	Gert Krestinov	363
4	Matiss Karro	308
5	Jamie Law	272

MX2

1	Elliott Banks-Browne	447
2	Mel Pocock	442
3	Bryan MacKenzie	343
4	Graeme Irwin	335
5	Neville Bradshaw	334

It's a double celebration for HM Plant KTM UK...



BRANDO'S BACK!

ANDERSON HITS THE PODIUM ON HIS MAXXIS RETURN...

Pitting out of the PAR truck again just like the good old days, two-time British MX1 champ Brad Anderson was back in Maxxis action at Little Silver where he scored third overall with a relatively steady 4-3-7 scorecard on his Carlton Dry Honda. Ando's back in the UK full time now and has already announced he'll be hunting for British title #3 with LPE Kawasaki next year.





Typically French flair
from Lenoir at DMP

STEVENS SIGNS STEVEN!

**AFTER SOME PREMATURE
SPECULATION LENOIR OFFICIALLY
LANDS AT EVO-TECH HONDA...**

After sensationally getting sacked by Roy Emberson hours before the final round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Culham, Steven Lenoir has found a new home for 2013 with Evo-Tech Stevens Honda. After getting tin tacked the flying Frenchman turned out on a Tyco Suzuki in Oxfordshire and then a Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki at Little Silver but will definitely be riding red in next year's Maxxis and Red Bull championships.



Brown and Chamberlain
take the title

GOLDEN BROWN!

**SUPER STU SEALS SIDECARCROSS
TITLE #10 AT CANADA HEIGHTS...**

Cheshire charioteer Stuart Brown claims his 10th British Sidecar Motocross Championship as the seventh and final round at Canada Heights in Kent is cancelled midway through a wet and wild opening moto that sees many of the racers struggle to get around the claggy circuit. In the interests of safety – and common sense – the meeting is called off and the series standings after round six at Wakes Colne stand for the season.

The shortened championship – only four rounds from seven are actually run – sees Brown and passenger Josh Chamberlain win on a whopping 271 points to tie Chris Etheridge's record of 10 titles while Richard Jenkins and Josh's brother Dan claim the silver medal position ahead of the hard charging Millard brothers Daniel and Joe. As well as filling all possible podium spots in the British championship the three teams also stood together as one to finish a fighting third at the Sidecarncross des Nations in Oss, Holland. Well in boys...



IRN-BRY

IT'S A WRAP!

THE RACE SEASON IS KAPUT BUT BRY FEELS
PRETTY DAMN GOOD ABOUT IT...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photo by Suttly

The last month of the season went pretty well for me as I picked up the form I was hoping for all year. After calling out lady luck in my column a few months ago, with all that Captain Depresso chat, things actually started to turn around – albeit at the tail end of the calendar. But better late than never, right?

I had my best day of the British championship – ever – at the final round down at Little silver where I was pumped to get back on the little 250F ripper and even more so, the podium. I smashed out good starts all day, lead a sh*t load of laps and came pretty close to getting that elusive first race win – and overall. All that was good for my championship too and I jumped from fifth to third in the final standings – pumped!

I pointed out afterwards on Twitter (you can follow me @brymac121) that not one of the top six guys in the championship finished in the same position they went into the final round in – that's pretty intense!

As soon as the last race of the year is finished I always feel relieved. The stress of preparing for the previous 11 months is either worth it or it isn't and although you never realise it at the time it's a massive subconscious stress all season as you constantly question whether you've prepared right and done enough in the build up to the start of the new season and even to each weekend individually. But after that last race is finished it's the first time of the year that all of that disappears because there's nothing you can do about it! Luckily for me it ended on a really positive note because it makes for a long winter if you're waiting on the next race to redeem yourself!

I put a tweet up a couple of weeks after Little Silver about what I'd been getting up to since the last race and during this time of supposed peace and tranquillity that's also known as the off season. I touched on how stacked my life had been since I banked my 26th race weekend of the year and what my immediate future schedule was looking like.

I got a reply from my mate Ed saying 'this is meant to be your off season, you need time to chill' and it made me think – what is the actual general perception of a professional rider's life? Is it that we just ride bikes and train a bit for seven to eight months of the year and then kick back and wake up with Jeremy Kyle show every morning? Or that we sip on sangria in the sun somewhere counting all of the purple paper in our wallets while waiting on March to come back around while still getting paid?

Well I dunno how it is for everyone else but I'll take a pretty confident guess that there aren't many people that race in the British championship that will be getting away with that. Admittedly, probably a few will but it won't be from what they've earned in prize money and salary – if you know what I mean. A lot of the guys will be grafting this winter and I will be too.

So this winter I'm busy! I'm gonna be like a guy with three faces. I have Bry the team guy, Bry the motocross

rider and Bry the regular dude all of which take up equally as much time as each other. The motocross rider Bry is the one that prepares to stretch the cable and makes the money, the team Bry helps give motocross Bry the opportunity to do his job to the best of his ability while the regular Joe Bry spends all of the money that motocross Bry has made! It's a vicious circle with no bloody thanks.

Bry the team guy is busy helping the pieces come together for the Pendrich team and at the minute we're in a pretty sweet position coming off the back of an awesome second half to the season. I've been busy tying up the bow around 2012 as well as working on things for 2013. That requires a lot of phone calls, even more emails, meetings and a little Facebooking to keep the team headed down the same strong path it's on.

On top of that there is a bit of design work to get done with some posters, a sponsorship brochure and even the look of the new bike graphics that I'm working on with Rad Ad and our graphic supplier Spiral to try and get ready for the Dirt Bike Show.

One of the biggest developments that has come out of all of this so far is the fact that we've secured support from Kawasaki UK which I'm really pleased about. We've also added another rider to the stable in the form of Ross Rutherford – aka Bunga. He's like the Tiger Woods of Scottish motocross and has won more Scottish MX1 titles than Suttly's had hot dinners!

Bryan Mackenzie as a rider – well he's busy too! We've got new bikes to work with so that will require some riding and testing work. Not too much though because lets face it I'm no stranger to the Kaws and neither is BC. I'll be attending the DBS for a day or two then I have a couple of presentations to attend and I'm booked up for a couple of training days also.

I start pre-season training again in early November which is almost a full time gig in itself and I'm looking forward to it already as I feel so terrible with the amount of crap I've consumed. I can't wait to get the show on the road. I also had a wee beaut of a gig that would have made even Mother Theresa moist! It was a once in a lifetime opportunity presented to me by DBR and you can read about it next month.

Finally we have Bryan Mackenzie the standard Joe. This chump is busy because I've just bought my first house with my missus and I want to do a bit of renovating to tailor it to how we want it and increase the value for when we come to sell it and move back towards home. I've been strapping on the old tool belt again for the first time in a while and put in four 13 hour shifts in the first five days of owning it.

Okay, granted they're not the worst jobs in the world and individually they don't warrant the label 'busy' but mash them all together and the calendar is soon in a headlock with time fast running out!

[Handwritten signature]
#121
dirtbikerider 21



JONTY'S BOX

FRENCH CONNECTION!

JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE FRENCH ENDURO SCENE THAT MAKES THEIR RIDERS SO DAMN GOOD?

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

So that's it for another year. Just about all national enduro championships have now finished. The ISDE has been and gone. And the Enduro World Championship is also over. For some it's been a good year, for others one to forget. But for the French it's been an absolute blinder... you've got to hand it to our friends across the channel because they've shown everyone how it's done in 2012.

It's hard to know just how well the French will perform in the coming years. Whether this year will be their best ever only time will tell. But my guess is that they're going to stay strong for a good while yet. Few doubt that eventually some other nation will come along and topple their dominance just as Finland did to the Italians and the French in turn did to the Finns. But for now they're sitting pretty.

At the top, bottom and middle of all EWC classes you'll find French riders. In most teams in the EWC paddock you'll also find French riders. Inside the FIM enduro commission you'll find plenty of French delegates and of course it's a French company that promotes the EWC series itself. The French have a stranglehold on the sport, no question about it.

So what can we learn from our Gallic cousins? Instead of complaining that the French have things all their own way, that international enduro sport has become a club in which the French decide who's in and who's out shouldn't we be looking and learning?

Ask any of France's top enduro racers at present why enduro is so strong in France and all will give slightly different answers. But interestingly most begin by saying it won't stay that way forever. Sport is a cyclical pastime in which nations rise and fall. But just as they recognise that they have it good at the moment they're also preparing themselves for the future. A future in which they hope they can remain at the top of the enduro tree.

France has always been a nation in which enduro has had a strong following. That, if you like, is the foundation to their success. A strong but not as long as you might expect national series – we're talking five world class

events – ensures the country's elite are kept on their toes. Added to which there are a number of 'classic' events – some of the biggest and best enduros in the world.

While in the UK it seems that it's often only our traveller friends that are granted the 'right to roam' in France huge sways of the countryside are still open to motorcyclists and that makes a huge difference. Tracks and trails stay open and clubs prosper – all of which ensures the sport of enduro lives on. In France there's a much more well-balanced approach to the use of the countryside. Communities embrace sport, motorcycle sport included.

Then there's the notion that success breeds success. And the French Motocross Championship plays a sizeable role in the nation's enduro successes right now. With Aubert, Meo, Renet, Nambotin, Tarroux, Thain, Bellino and company all coming from motocross I think there are two reasons why the French are as dominant as they are right now.

Firstly, some of their very best young motocross racers have had the balls to switch away from the sport they dreamed of getting to the very top of. Instead of being blinkered, only seeing motocross and nothing else, and following what you know, one by one French motocross riders have crossed over. Firstly it was Aubert, then Meo... how many more will come no one knows. Secondly, that French motocross system has given them the skills to tackle the international enduro scene.

Britain is starting to enjoy success in the junior ranks of the EWC with younger riders that have come from motocross. In the same way that Aubert and Meo shone a light down a new path that other French riders followed the Knighter effect is in part responsible for the emergence of some of our young talent.

Let's just hope that more follow and the McCanney brothers, Jane Daniels and the like can inspire other younger motocross and trials riders to give enduro a go.

CALENDAR CLUB!

2013 SPRINT DATES ANNOUNCED

British Sprint Enduro Championship organisers GMC Events have announced the dates for the extended 2013 ACU BSEC series which starts in early March and is set to end at the beginning of September. There's no word as yet on the venues the series will travel to but one or two new locations are rumoured to be mixed in with the best from this year. In addition the series has again managed to avoid the BEC, EEC and EWC schedules.

While no changes are expected to the below dates ongoing issues with an eighth round of the Enduro World Championship means that the EWC series still isn't set in stone yet which might have an impact on the BSEC if an additional world championship race is found. For now though these are the dates on which the series will run – March 2/3, April 6/7, May 25/26, August 3/4 and August 31/ September 1.

Bolts, Grimbo and JW say cheese!



TURKISH DELIGHT!

JARVIS KICKS ASS AT SEA TO SKY...

Graham Jarvis has continued his dominance of the extreme enduro scene with an almost start-to-finish win in the 2012 edition of the Red Bull Sea to Sky held in Turkey.

Entering the event as the defending champion the Husaberg rider was hot favourite for victory and although he didn't disappoint he didn't have things all his own way. Finishing second overall, KTM's Jonny Walker pushed Jarvis every step of the way while Eurotek KTM's Paul Bolton chased both riders home for third – ensuring a memorable all-British podium.

Situated at the popular beachside tourist resort of Kemer, the 130 competitors entered from 20 different nations raced from the Turkish Mediterranean shoreline through rocky forest tracks up to the finish line situated at the 2365m high summit of the towering Olympus Mountain.

Grabbing the holeshot, Spain's Xavi Galindo held the early lead as riders jostled for position down the first riverbed section. Fighting their way through the pack after a bad start both Jarvis and Walker simultaneously hit the front of the field together. Joined by Germany's Andreas Lettenbichler the trio traded positions until Lettenbichler dropped back due to a snapped chain.

With Jarvis and Walker left to fight it out for the win neither rider was able to gain an advantage. As Walker began to tire, Jarvis sensed the opportunity to attack and giving one last final push he broke clear and crossed the summit as the Red Bull Sea to Sky champion.

With Walker chasing him home for second Bolton blitzed his way through the field following a disastrous start to ensure a British 1-2-3.

Antoine Meo was already crowned champion before his home round in Brignoles



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DAKAR FEVER!

THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST RALLY LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA ROCK...

With the annual Dakar Rally fast approaching it's becoming clear that this is one of the most anticipated editions in recent years. Husqvarna, Yamaha, Boreone Ferrari and now Honda and Gas Gas have all lined up to try and stop KTM's decade of domination.

After a 24-year absence Honda returned to the world of rally with their new CRF450 Rally at the recent Oulibya Morocco Rally. Helder Rodrigues – who they hope will ride the CRF450 Rally straight to the top step of the Dakar Rally podium in South America next January – is part of their strong five-rider line up. Joining Rodrigues is Johnny Campbell, Felipe Zanol, Javier Pizzolito and United Arab Emirates based Brit Sam Sunderland.

"I feel privileged and honoured to have been chosen to be a Honda factory rider," confirmed Sunderland at the CRF450 Rally press launch in Morocco. "It's something I have dreamed about since I was a kid. I'm the young and inexperienced guy in the team but I'm learning a lot from Helder and Johnny."

In October Gas Gas officially launched their purpose built rally bike – the Gas Gas 450 EC-Raid. Based on the Gas Gas EC 450F enduro the Spanish manufacture will be hoping that newly crowned trial and enduro world champion Laia Sanz will be able to successfully defend her #1 position as the Dakar's fastest female.

IT'S A WRAP!

THE 2012 EWC FINISHES IN FRANCE...

The 2012 Enduro World Championship finally drew to a close in Brignoles, France where Husaberg's Pela Renet secured the last remaining senior class title.

Favourite to secure the coveted Enduro 2 championship Renet's job was made a little easier as Cristobal Guerrero – his closest title challenger – was forced to compete injured having dislocated his shoulder while representing Spain at the six days.

Second on day one behind Johnny Aubert, Renet started the final day of the series needing just a handful of points and lifted his first Enduro World Championship crown with relative ease. Also handing Husaberg their first EWC senior title in 14 years Renet confirmed that he'd be staying with the Swedish/Austrian manufacturer for 2013/2014.

"It's been an amazing year for me and to win here in France is just great," explained the former MX3 world champion. "Fighting with Johnny on day one really helped me to forget about the championship and on day two I just pushed as hard as I could without going too crazy. I'm going to enjoy this and spend some time relaxing now."

Joining Renet in securing a world title was Spain's Laia Sanz who topped the Enduro Women's championship ahead of Ludivine Puy who went on to announce she'd be stepping back from international competition having been enduro's fastest female for many, many years.

Jane Daniels made a return to the EWC following her solid podium finish first time out in Italy a few months back and again placed top three. On the box

alongside Lulu and Laia on day one Jane missed the podium by a handful of seconds on day two but again showed she's more than got what it takes to mix it with the sports very best.

Britain's best result came from Jamie McCanney in the Youth Cup 125cc class. Putting an injury-hit year well and truly behind him Jamie claimed a deserved victory on day one and came close to a second win on day two.

"It would have been nice to have won both days but I was a little too cautious in the last test on Sunday," commented Jamie. "But it's great to end the year with a win. I've never ridden in rocky conditions before but I enjoyed it. It's nice to know that my speed's good even if I don't have as much experience as some of the other riders in my class."

Jamie's brother Danny had a mixed weekend in France – finishing second on day one but crashing out on day two. Ending up a strong third in the Enduro Junior championship the Gas Gas mounted Manxman now sets his sights on battling for the 2013 EJ championship win.

"Day one was good and day two started well but I guess these things happen," commented Danny. "Apart from not finishing day two it's been a great year. I've improved and managed to claim a day win in Finland. I'm happy with the way my first year in the EWC has gone. Now I've got to focus on trying to win the title next year."

Alex Rockwell also brought his participation in the 2012 EWC series to a close in Brignoles and although the event didn't go exactly as planned for Rocky he ended the year eighth in the

Enduro Junior championship standings.

Returning to the series following his stomach operation David Knight battled his way through the EWC finale. Unable to make an impact on the top of the E3 class results Knight ended the event simply pleased that he was back racing and able to start working towards his 2013 plans.

"I knew that the event would be hard as I've raced and ridden so little during the last couple of months. With racing the BEC, walking all the tests here in France and racing for two days I've gone from doing very little to 10 days of nothing but rushing around flat out everywhere which has been tough. The 2012 world championship's been one to forget but I'm fully committed to a full racing programme for next year."

What events that programme will include – and on what machinery David will race – will be announced soon...

FINAL STANDINGS

ENDURO 1

1	Antoine Meo	257
2	Rodrig Thain	191
3	Thomas Oldrati	179
4	Eero Remes	177
5	Matti Seistola	172

ENDURO 2

1	Pela Renet	260
2	Cristobal Guerrero	243
3	Juha Salminen	236
4	Ivan Cervantes	173
5	Johnny Aubert	162

ENDURO 3

1	Christophe Nambotin	314
2	Joakim Ljunggren	238
3	Aigar Leok	232
4	David Knight	178
5	Oriol Mena	167



PERFECT 10!

KNIGHTER WRAPS UP A 10TH BEC TITLE

David Knight successfully won yet another overall British Enduro Championship title at the final round of the 2012 BEC series in Eelmoor to become the series' most successful ever competitor. Showing no ill effects of his recent stomach operation, Knight stamped his authority on the event to win both days in convincing style and claim his 10th BEC title.

"Getting a 10th BEC title means a lot to me for many different reasons," says Bigfoot. "There's a few younger riders that are really starting to ride well in the UK and to be honest I enjoy things more now that I am being pushed harder. For several years I knew I was going to win and would be waiting to finish an event almost as soon as it had started. But now I know I have to push hard which I enjoy."

JARVIS ROCKER!

GRIMBO IS THE KING OF EXTREME ENDURO

In the inaugural running of the Kings of Extreme Enduro championship Graham Jarvis was crowned the 2012 champion at the penultimate round of the series at the Red Bull Sea to Sky in Turkey.

Although not an official world championship as such, the KoEE takes into consideration the top seven events on the extreme enduro calendar. By awarding points for results in the Tough One (UK), Hell's Gate (Italy), Erzbergerodeo (Austria), Red Bull Romaniacs (Romania), Extreme Lagares

(Portugal), Red Bull Sea to Sky (Turkey) and finally the Roof of Africa (South Africa) a world extreme enduro series has been created.

"It's really cool to have won this championship," remarked Jarvis. "Although we don't have an official extreme enduro world championship this one is funded and organised by the fans and spectators of our sport. It's a special title to win."

With his second place finish in the Red Bull Sea to Sky Jonny Walker was confirmed as the series runner up.



Bam Bam slams the competition in Vegas



BIG BUCK HUNTER!

BARCIA BANGS OUT THREE SOLID RIDES AT THE MONSTER ENERGY CUP TO BAG HIMSELF AN 'UNDRED GRAND...

Words and photos by **Steve Cox**

The second-annual Monster Energy Cup seemed destined to improve over the first incarnation. First off, more racers signed up to do battle making it seem less likely that Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto would pull off his second straight three-main sweep and pull in another million bucks. Also, the track was changed up. There was a split start and another strange element thrown into the mix – the Joker Lane. The Joker Lane was a lane of sandy whoops, off the main racing line and by rule every single racer has to take that lane one time in each 10-lap main event.

The first main event saw Josh Grant

snatch the lead off the start in front of Ryan Dungey and Villopoto. Dungey bent his shifter on the first lap though and started going backward as he was stuck in second gear. Villopoto moved into second then on the third lap took over the lead. He pulled out a sizeable lead then did the Joker Lane late in the race while maintaining his lead over Justin Barcia. He was back in the running for another million bucks.

In race two Villopoto actually snatched the holeshot and began to pull away only to go down pretty hard in the back section of the track. It took him a while to get going again and he was definitely wobbly as he got back to his bike. He eventually finished 12th.

Meanwhile, Dungey had the lead but then he bent his shifter again – believe it or not – and Mike Alessi took over out front. Barcia passed them both to take the win while Dungey fought off Alessi for second despite having to heroically hand-shift his KTM over the jumps as he headed into the fast section of the track. Alessi finished third in front of Tomac, Grant and Reed who crashed a few laps from the end while running third.

The final main event started without the defending event champ due to his head injury. Dungey snatched the early lead in front of Barcia, Tomac, Grant and Reed. The top three began pulling away which

allowed Tomac to take the Joker Lane early in the race. As he began chasing Barcia and Dungey back down again, Barcia went by Dungey when Dungey took the Joker Lane which also handed second place to Tomac. With two laps to go Barcia took the Joker Lane and Tomac inherited the lead. He led the last two laps to score the final main event victory over Barcia, Dungey, Reed and Grant.

Although no one took home the million this year Barcia took home a cool \$100,000 with his 2-1-2 score while Dungey finished second – for the second year in a row – with a 3-2-3 score and Tomac finished third with a 4-4-1.



© Simon Cudby

First it's white and then it's blue...

MIX N' MATCH!

WHY SWAPPING FENDERS SENDS JOSH GRANT TO DISTRACTION...

The JGR/Toyota Yamaha team debuted their two new/old riders at the Monster Energy Cup with former employees Josh Grant and Justin Brayton both returning to the squad after brief stints at Team Honda (the pair of them) and Jeff Ward Racing Kawasaki (just Grant). When they showed up for practice they had Yamaha YZ450Fs decked out in white then after the first session the team put blue front

fenders back on the YZ-Fs.

Why? "It's distracting," claimed Grant. "You get used to seeing that blue fender there in front of you and then all of a sudden it's white!" After swapping back to the more familiar blue Grant puts in a decent performance on the night running 6-5-5 across the three mains to take fifth overall. Brayton's evening is hampered by a DNF in the third main though and he slips to 11th overall in the final ranking.

BRITISH INVASION!

SUPER SPANNER-SPINNER STONE SEALS SWEET SPOT STATESIDE...

Jake Nicholls' former wrench Olly Stone received a surprise phone call from Mitch Payton after the Motocross des Nations and has now headed to America to join the famous Pro Circuit race team. After receiving the offer of employment Stone booked himself on the first available flight so he could fulfill a personal dream. Keen as mustard Olly was enthusing about his new role in the pits at Las Vegas. "The set-up is so professional and so I just wanted to get out here as early as I could," he said. Stone will have to hit the ground running with what's arguably the most famous – but also the most dedicated and demanding team – on the AMA circuit.



FACTORY FORKS!

VILLOPOTO AND WEIMER TRY SFF TECHNOLOGY...

A couple of years ago the Kawasaki KX250F began coming stock with the Showa SFF system. SFF stands for Separate Function Fork and it works by separating the functions between forks – hence the name. One fork handles damping while the other fork handles compression and ride height. It had actually been invented quite a few years earlier by Showa but Showa couldn't find anyone to give it a run on factory weaponry. Well, recently Kawasaki decided to give it a test on their factory KX450Fs and they made their race debut with them at the Monster Energy Cup. If Villopoto's speed is anything to go by they'll do just fine...

HOT DATES!

AMA SUPERCROSS SERIES

The AMA SX series gets off to an early start next year with Anaheim 1 happening just days after the New Year celebrations. Like usual it all ends in Las Vegas and there's the perennial trip north of the border to Canada for round 12 of 17. It seems kinda crazy but almost a third of the rounds happen in the state of California before Valentine's Day and then the championship heads east for the next few weekends...

January 5	Anaheim, California
January 12	Phoenix, Arizona
January 19	Los Angeles, California
January 26	Oakland, California
February 2	Anaheim, California
February 9	San Diego, California
February 16	Arlington, Texas
February 23	Atlanta, Georgia
March 2	St Louis, Missouri
March 9	Daytona, Florida
March 16	Indianapolis, Indiana
March 23	Toronto, Canada
April 6	Houston, Texas
April 13	Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 20	Seattle, Washington
April 27	Salt Lake City, Utah
May 4	Las Vegas, Nevada



AMERICAN IDIOT

SAFETY FIRST!

COX EXAMINES THE NEW AMA RULE THAT'S GONNA MAKE THE SPORT OF SUPERCROSS MUCH SAFER FOR ITS RACERS...

Words and photo by **Steve Cox**

Concussions have become a subject of a lot of discussion and controversy over the last few years especially in the USA. In the NFL – where we play football using mostly our hands unlike soccer where we use our feet – they've been exploring the long-term repercussions of concussions and have come to some very sobering conclusions.

One study showed that any person who has suffered three or more severe concussions is more likely to become clinically depressed later in life. Other studies have shown that concussions lead to Post-Concussion Syndrome which can present itself in very much the same way as dementia and has likely been misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's for decades.

One NFL player – Junior Seau – who was an absolute hero on the field took his own life last May at the age of 43 due to depression that many think is linked to his chosen career.

And on top of that there are all of the direct consequences of concussions in sport, including the slowing of reaction times, and in extreme cases – such as that of former racer Broc Hepler – things like vertigo which made it completely impossible for Hepler to return to racing after his series of head injuries.

The NFL has taken some serious steps in an attempt to stop this pattern from repeating and with them taking the lead other sports are following in their path. The next biggest sport is NASCAR racing where strict concussion policies recently led them to prevent their most popular driver – Dale Earnhardt Jr – from racing two consecutive races while he is in the middle of the championship run known as The Chase. That's how serious they are.

And in motocross there's a similar movement

afoot in the USA. The Asterisk Mobile Medical team has been taking cognitive baselines from top racers in order to give them a way to test the racers prior to letting them return to action after a head injury. In the supercross series in 2012 it was voluntary but now it's not!

Now if a racer suffers a head injury they need to pass this test to return to action. And we may have seen the first result of this policy at the Monster Energy Cup. During practice Kevin Windham hit a false neutral in the back section and landed on his head. He was knocked out. He may have sat out the event anyway but with these policies in place he had to sit it out. He had no choice.

And then in the second main event of the night Ryan Villopoto was leading when he went over the bars and got up noticeably wobbly. He got back to racing and finished the race but didn't return for the final of the three main events. Maybe it was his choice but again with the concussion policies set forth he probably wouldn't have had a choice anyway.

Many times if you leave choices like these up to the athletes themselves they'll make the wrong choice. They will choose to not quit and to press on as if everything is fine. Luckily, the sanctioning bodies are starting to figure out that although this behavior can be admired by fans it's bad for the athletes and ultimately bad for the sports themselves.

Sports need healthy stars and long careers create long-term fans so that covers the business end and on the ethical end we all have a responsibility to protect the people who provide this entertainment for us. Because that's really all sport is – entertainment.





Typical first dune carnage...



Ken de Dycker takes third



Herlings washes the 'sand' from his chops

ROOKIE TERROR!

NEWCOMER JEFFREY HERLINGS SNATCHES VICTORY IN WILD WESTON SHOWDOWN...

Photos by Nuno Laranjeira and Ray Archer

MX2 world champ and MXdN moto winner Jeffrey Herlings adds another victory to this year's tally as he rockets to a well-deserved win at the 2012 Weston Beach Race. The Dutch teenager heads home Shaun Simpson and Ken de Dycker in the three hour classic that annually invades the sleepy Somerset beach resort each autumn.

It's actually De Dycker who leads from the off until his over exuberance bites his ass on the opening lap and he goes down like a sack o' spuds which allows Simpson to take the lead until he suffers a similar fate. "I was behind two guys on a jump and there were two main lines," explains Woody. "I thought I could make a new line to get by but there was a big soft part at the back and I went over the bars."

With his two main challengers losing time and Brad Anderson still slightly out

of sorts following his Australian odyssey there's simply no stopping the Dutch teenager who romps home to victory with 22 laps in the bag.

"It was really good," says Jeffrey after the event. "I was surprised how well it went. I paced myself in the beginning to save my energy and I was about 30 seconds back but I cruised around and only had to do two pit stops for fuel which helped. I had a couple of crashes and went through the fence really fast at one point too – it was a really tough race and I'm glad I won."

RESULTS WESTON BEACH RACE

- 1 **Jeffrey Herlings** Red Bull KTM
- 2 **Shaun Simpson** Monster Energy Yamaha
- 3 **Ken de Dycker** Red Bull KTM
- 4 **Nathan Watson** PAR Honda
- 5 **Brad Anderson** Honda



Woody leads early doors but eventually slips to second



Yes, your bum looks big in this dress...



PORTLAND THRILL!

JAKE SHIPTON SHINES BRIGHTEST AS WEYMOUTH BEACH BLAST ENTERTAINS THE MASSES...

Photos by Mike Wood

While Herlings was offering up a beating to all comers on the soaking sands of Weston a slightly smaller but no less enthusiastic band of beach racers were strutting their stuff in much drier going at Weymouth. For the past 20-odd years – except that time the medical team failed to show of course – the Purbeck AMCA club have successfully sculpted the south coast sand into an awesome circuit and run a short sharp race programme for amateur licence holders and visiting pro class heroes alike.

This year's big winner is Emberson Yamaha's Jake Shipton whose granddad Alf perennially takes charge of the start at this charity event. Despite not yanking either holey the Maxxis runner beats off a stiff challenge from Lee Dunham and Matt Porter in the two 30 minute motos to take the top prize.

As well as the two Expert clashes races are also run for the up n' comers in the Junior and Senior divisions. Fans of the Honey Monster will be gutted to know his challenge was soundly squashed by Lee Wren in the Senior class while Brett Moore won the Juniors on his KTM.

More AMCA beach race action will go off at Skegness – in similarly dry sand – on November 17/18. Entries are still available online at www.amca.uk.com and remember – just like Weymouth was – it's totally free to watch!

RESULTS EXPERTS

- 1 Jake Shipton
- 2 Lee Dunham
- 3 Matt Porter

SENIORS

- 1 Lee Wren
- 2 Edward Mountjoy
- 3 Neil Hawker

JUNIORS

- 1 Brett Moore
- 2 Liam Williams
- 3 Liam Annetts



DANGEROUS SILVER SERVICE!

LEE ENDS HIS YEAR SECOND IN THE AMCA SERIES AND SECOND IN THE WEYMOUTH BEACH BLAST N'ALL...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Mike Wood

So we ended the AMCA championships at Hawkstone Park. It was such a weird track to ride this year as they ran a meeting there the day before and didn't have time to prepare it to the usual standard. It meant the track was gnarly soft for qualifying and then we had three slow but demanding races.

I went into the race only a few points behind and came away only a few points behind – that's how things go sometimes I guess. I pulled the holeshot in race one but where the track has now changed I missed my braking point and drifted wide allowing about 10 or more riders through – it was so frustrating! I caught back to third which wasn't too bad.

In race two I had such a good jump from the concrete start I looked to my right and saw no-one there! That was such a good feeling. I had the braking point sorted and took the early lead until I made a mistake which allowed Clinton Barrs through. I then went to pass him but he made a mistake and ran into my line which allowed Lee Payne to come by us both. From there on in all three of us put in some good laps, Barry went down on a corner and left Payne and I to get the hammer down! It was a fun race but annoyingly I was two seconds behind at the finish!

In the last moto I didn't get a great start at all but pushed through into third. By this time the two in front were gone and although Payne finished behind me it wasn't enough to secure the championship. Well done to him and Clinton – they both rode awesome all year.

The week after was the Weymouth beach race and it's by far the funniest and most enjoyable race on my calendar. You have a long practise and then two 30 minute motos with a dead engine start – on a beach, with jumps and bumps and the odd small dune. Awesome! For anyone that hasn't ever done it get down there!

We arrived and within a lap I'd done a clutch, basically we had put a tiny rear sprocket on the bike and where the track was so tight and twisty the bike couldn't pull it. So we nipped back to the lorry to fix it but as it's the end of the season there were no new parts. We borrowed one from my other bike though and at least I was able to ride.

The first race was so much fun! I gated okay but got a mouthful of roost on the first dune! I quickly moved into third behind James Harrison and Jake Shipton until James had an off which ended his day too soon. The rest of the race was really good fun, berm smashing and berm bashing all race long.

In moto two I lined up with Jake next to me. The dead engine start went well and I got out second behind Scott Carter the two-stroke king but my 450 soon smoked him. I holeshot and lead for the first few laps but Jake passed me – he was on it! Around mid-way in my clutch started dragging and I had to coast home! My buddy Josh rode too. He hadn't even started his bike in two years but entered and had a blast although I think he stopped for coffee half way through.

Away from motocross I've been out and about enjoying life! I watched the new Taken 2 film a few weeks back which is pretty sick! Old matey is the man when it comes to hide and seek – he finds everyone. I also went bowling and I am officially the worst person to go bowling with apparently as I hit the barriers so the ball came back towards me! I did get beat very badly and I don't think I'll live it down for a very long time.

I've literally just got back from the Kawasaki 2013 Test and Try out day at FatCat Motoparc. Everyone there had a mega day, loved the track and said the bikes are awesome too! Kawasaki put on a great show and had 20 bikes on test! A couple of the Scottish boys had a blast on my bike to test it... I've no idea if they liked it or not because I can never understand a word they say! There were a lot of nodding heads though so I guess it went well.

It's the end of another season and it's been a very wet year with five meetings cancelled. There's been a lot of lows and a lot of highs. I ended up fifth in the European championships and second in the British. I hope you all had a good season and if not try and figure out what went wrong so you don't let it happen again! Mistakes only happen once and if something happens twice it's because you've failed to prepare...

Lee Dunham
dirtbikerider 27



WIN!

PHOTO OF THE MONTH!

I'm **Corporal Walton** and I'm currently serving a six month tour of Afghanistan. We're about three months in now and starting to grind. We're out in a FOB (Forward Operating Base) so welfare and since goodies don't really filter down to us I had the grand idea to contact yourselves directly to see if you can help us out.

We read *Dirt Bike Rider* magazine from cover to cover but new issues are hard to find! It's such a great magazine and we can't wait to get back to my beauty and do some much needed riding. I took part in Enduro Africa last year and that was such an amazing trip – I would recommend it to all readers of your magazine.

Ian, Afghanistan



MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Holly Ellis gets the honour of being dirtZone member of the month. She's always happy to 'friend', chat and upload content while putting up with a lot of misplaced friendliness from other [dirtZoners](http://dirtZone). For being Hank Hill's designated [dirtZoner](http://dirtZone) Holly wins a **Renthal Softshell jacket**, some **Muc-Off** and 5,000 loyalty points.



Muc-Off

If your dirtZone post appears on this page you'll win a one-litre bottle of marvellous Muc-Off bike cleaner* – unless you live outside Britain in which case we'll send you some of Muc-Off's brilliant brushes and wipes instead...

*One bottle per member per month



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

FIND J-LAW'S LUNCHBOX AND WIN SOME AWESOME KNOX ORYX GLOVES...

Since *Sutty* sneaked away with J-Law's lunchbox at the Bassenthwaite GP back in the summer Jamie's been a little grumpy about it. In fact he's so peeved he's hooked up with his long-term sponsor Knox to offer every DBR reader who spots his lunchbox the chance to win a pair of his favourite gloves!

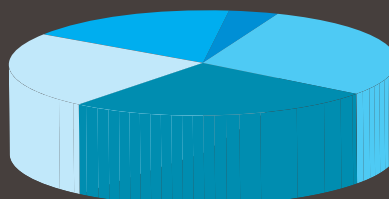
Knox knows that getting injured sucks which is why the Cockermouth protection specialist goes the extra mile to produce the most protective products around. Jamie knows this too and he's a massive fan of the Oryx gloves that are lightweight and

comfortable but have SPS Inside – that's Knox's patented Scaphoid and Palm Protection System.

To be in with a chance of winning a pair of Oryx gloves all you have to do is let us know on which page J-Law's lunchbox is hiding. When you've figured out if it's on page **A: 97, B: 15, C: 31, D: none of the above**, log on to our website and follow the competitions link to dirtZone. Then fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The competition closes on **December 6** with the first correct randomly drawn entry winning the gloves.

POLL OF THE MONTH!

Given the choice which 250F would you splash your cash on?



- KAWASAKI KX250
- KTM 250SX-F
- HONDA CRF250R
- YAMAHA YZ250F
- HUSQVARNA TC250

RADIO GA GA

If you're ever online and fancy a little background listening we can definitely recommend that you log on to internet radio station **Biker FM**. The station is always airing good stuff but Wednesday night between 8 and 10pm is when you really need to listen because that's when the *Motocross Show* with Chris Warren Jnr goes out live. Check it out by surfing over to www.bikerfm.co.uk.



SWEET TWEETS



@AirohOffRoadUK
Win with [@dbrmagazine](http://dbrmagazine)
[@TMXNews](http://TMXNews) at the
[@Dirt_Bike_Show](http://Dirt_Bike_Show) an Airoh helmet – two to be won get to their stand!

@itsWillyFerrell

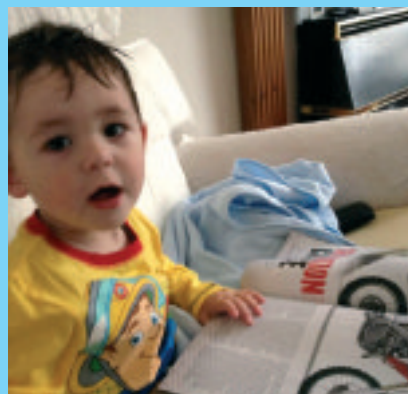
If a bra is called an "Over the shoulder boulder holder" does that make men's underwear an "Under the butt nut hut?"

@Rockstar_ure

Just done a [@JakeNicholls45](http://JakeNicholls45) circuit from [@dbrmagazine](http://dbrmagazine). Aching already. [#hardcore](http://hardcore) [#needaeditdown](http://needaeditdown) [#gonnaregretthisinthemorning](http://gonnaregretthisinthemorning)

@danr1982

My nephew Callum reading [@dbrmagazine](http://dbrmagazine) two years old and wants a dirt bike [#futurestar](http://futurestar)





FANCY A BLAST?

HOW YOU CAN RIDE OFF-ROAD FOR FREE AT MOTORCYCLE LIVE

It used to be that the NEC Bike Show was all about road bikes, scooters and lycra-clad hooters and while all those things are still present in abundance there's now a lot more off-road goodness to peruse n'all. And that's a doubly good thing because not only does it give us a great reason to head to the NEC between **November 24** and **December 2** but it opens up our dirty little world to that road bike rabble as well.

There are even a few initiatives to help entice those leather-clad lads and lasses over to the dark side. These include the Yamaha Off-Road Experience (that gives everyone the opportunity to try motocross on a specially designed indoor circuit) and the ACU Try Trials Area which is exactly as it sounds – a place to try trials with the ACU.

Of course if there are any trials riders out there who fancy giving a bike with a seat a try they'll be made most welcome at the Yamaha Off-Road Experience while motocross and enduro guys who want to give the feet-up game a whirl are equally encouraged to

get on over to the ACU Try Trials Area. Sweet.

While both those activities are for grown ups only, junior day trippers who fancy becoming motocross rippers can get involved with the Red Bull Pro Nationals KTM experience for 5 to 12 year olds. Basically, complete novices can get a sound introduction to MX in a safe environment – and it doesn't cost a bean. Cool huh?

As well as these hands on affairs there's also off-road action you can sit back and enjoy. The Ramp'd Up FMX Arena will run three shows daily where Fredrik Berggren, Disco Dave Wiggins and Jamie Squibb will be throwing down with German brothers Hannes and Luc Ackermann and then there's a plethora of dirt bikes on display, retail stands and stuff like that to check out too.

Advance tickets for Motorcycle Live 2012 cost just £16 per adult, £10 for seniors and £6 for children. To book your tickets call **0844 581 2345** or visit www.motorcycellive.co.uk and click the tickets link.



TALE OF YORE!

THE LOWDOWN ON YAMAHA'S OFF-ROAD EXPERIENCE...

The Yamaha Off-Road Experience is overseen by chief instructor Barry Johnson who some of you may remember was a pretty badass rider back in the day racing GPs, British championships and stuff. Since quitting the sport he has concentrated on coaching and is one of the best in the business.

While Motorcycle Live 2012 is obviously a big deal to the guys at YORE the bulk of their business takes place away from prying eyes at four

venues around the country – Penkridge, Golding Barn, Winchester and Bolton. Throughout the year the YORE team host around 70 days that are mostly full booked way in advance. The days cater for everyone and anyone aged 10 or older cost £185 which is very fair when you consider bike, kit hire and coaching is all included.

For more details on the Yamaha Off-Road Experience hit up www.yamaha-schools.co.uk or call **01543 271675**.

WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

10 PAIRS OF MOTORCYCLE LIVE TICKETS MUST BE WON...

If you fancy going to Motorcycle Live this year but don't much fancy coughing up for a ticket then we've got just the opportunity for you! Basically, we stole our internet guru Hank Hill's credit card and used it to purchase a pile of tickets. However, because we're not proud of what we've done – and don't much fancy getting our asses

kicked by karma – we've decided that we're gonna give 'em all away to our loyal readers because we're nice like that.

So to be in with a chance of saving some cash by taking two of the tickets off our hands – and also potentially saving our souls at the same time – all you have to do is answer this easy question.

Which former GP racer runs the Yamaha Off-Road Experience that you can try at the show for free?

Is it: A: Ricky Johnson
B: Barry Johnson
C: Boris Johnson
D: Lyndon B Johnson

If you think you know the answer

log on to our website and follow the competitions link in **dirtZone** or use your smartphone to scan this funky **QR code** which'll take you right there. The competition closes on **November 20** when the first 10 correct answers randomly drawn from Hank Hill's propane accessories drawer will win a pair of tickets!

MOTORCYCLE LIVE

NEC BIRMINGHAM 2012



ALIAS

GEICO HONDA SWEATSHIRT

You can't beat slipping into a warm n' comfy hoody after an autumn session on the bike and if you're a red rider – or just a huge fan of the Geico Honda team – then this is the hoody you need in your life. Available now through the Alias dealer network this tough-as-old-boots but welcoming-as-a-warm-bath piece of clothing is just ideal for killing the chill we're most likely to experience over the next few months.

Price: £50

Supplier: aliasmx.com

Contact: 0870 243 8817

FACTORY EFFEX

TWO-TWO MOTORSPORTS GRAPHIC SETS

If you want your bike to look kinda like Chad Reed's whether it be a Honda, KTM, Kawasaki, Suzuki or Yamaha then Factory Effex have got you covered with their outstanding range of Two-Two Motorsports graphic sets. The kits are constructed using the latest material and design technologies and printed on thick ultra-curve vinyl using super strong adhesives. It sounds like once they're on you're stuck with 'em so choose wisely. Other designs are available...

Price: £99.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226

NONE

RACING EXHAUSTS

None performance exhaust systems are now available here in the UK thanks to Sandiford Offroad who have just started importing them from Spain. None has been building exhausts since 1972 and seem to have their technique dialled because these super competitively priced pipes are the nuts! Tried and tested by Maxxis Privateer of the Year Ashley Wilde, None exhausts can be bought either as full systems or just slip on silencers. What's really interesting about the None range though (aside from the aggressive look) is that full dyno graphs showing the performance gains for each model are available to view on their website – www.noneracing.com.

Price: Slip on silencer £299

Full system £450

Supplier: sandifordoffroad.co.uk

Contact: 01254 246077



JT RACING

EVOLVE PROTEK RACEWEAR

After only producing a limited range of products for their relaunch last year, JT Racing are now fully back in the game and have gone all out for 2013. Their stunning range of Evolve Protek racewear is well designed and way more technical than last year's iconic offerings but it's the modern look that's really gonna appeal to the new generation of racers.

Price: Pants £149.99 Jersey £49.99

Gloves £34.99 ALS2 helmet £239.99

Supplier: decade-europe.com

Contact: 01792 469811

GOPRO

HERO3: BLACK ACTION CAMERA

Smaller, lighter, sexier and packed with way more functions than ever before the GoPro Hero3: Black is without doubt the highest-spec action camera available on the market today. It's crazy to think that this small box of magic is able to capture 12 mega pixel images and video footage at amazing levels of definition at up to 240 frames per second!

The Black edition Hero3 comes with a remote control which makes recording film and snapping images way easier than ever before and the whole thing is Wi-Fi compatible so transferring footage is ridiculously simple. Basically, we're blown away by this and can't wait to get our hands on one to try. Get your own mind blown over at www.gopro.com.

Price: £359.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226



ALPINESTARS

BIONIC SX KNEE PROTECTOR

Keep your knees safe inside these Alpinestars Bionic SX protectors that offer exceptional coverage of the knee, shin and lower thigh. They're lightweight, highly breathable and comfy enough to keep on all day which makes 'em suitable for motocross, enduro and trail riding as well as supercross. So ignore the SX tag and look after your lower leg joints whatever your sport...

Price: £79.99

Supplier: alpinestars.com

Contact: CI Sport 01372 378000

XISPA

ELECTRIC BIKES

If you're in the market for an e-bike for your wee ripper then check out these awesome new models from Xispa. Available in trials or motocross spec these fully tuneable 48 volt machines have a run time of between two and three hours and are suitable for kids who weigh four stone or less. What makes these bikes stand out from some of their competition is the quality of componentry used with the suspension and disc brakes being particularly sweet! Check 'em out at the Dirt Bike Show or online at www.xispa-uk.com.

Price: Trial E25 £1399

Enducross E10 £14.99

Supplier: xispa-uk.com

Contact: 01254 246077

MSR

SEAT COVER

If you wear out seat covers as fast as knee-grippin' Estonian Gert Krestinov then you'll need plenty of hard wearing and well priced replacements which is where this bad boy from MSR comes in because not only is it well priced it's hard wearing too! Available now for pretty much every off-road bike from most off-road dealers!

Price: £27.99

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



ETNIES

TWO-TWO MOTORSPORTS CLOTHING

Etnies products are always top-notch and when a company that's renowned for the quality and comfort of its clothing range hooks up with a team as beloved as the Two-Two Motorsports crew then you know you that swag's gonna be off the hook! The full range is available now through online giants Freestyle Xtreme so head online and check them out y'all!

Price: see website

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

Contact: 0117 304 9561

ODI

CFT HANDLEBARS

ODI is proud to announce the launch of their Controlled Flex Technology handlebars that are basically a lightweight, 6061 aluminium handlebar designed to provide extra flex and comfort which most likely means our man Wakker's gonna love 'em for his extreme off-road adventures. If they sound like the kind of bars you'd like to grip it and rip it with then check them out at your local dirt bike dealer today!

Price: £79.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226

THOR

2013 FORCE 2 HELMETS

The Force 2 helmet from THOR is the end result of years of research and development both in the lab and on the track with reigning AMA supercross champion Ryan Villopoto. Well-vented, light, super comfy and safe as houses – it's ACU gold approved – the Force 2 is available in these funktacular new designs and is waiting for you down at your local dirt bike emporium.

Price: £199.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226







TRADE ENQUIRIES
CONTACT 08702438817
ALIASMXMEDIA@ADL.CO.UK
WWW.ALIASM.COM



Mel Pocock's been a revelation
in 2012 taking the European
EMX-250 title by storm

EURO FIGHTER!

EMX-250 CHAMP MEL POCOCK TAKES US THROUGH HIS YEAR ABROAD AND THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF NOT PICKING UP THE #1 PLATE BACK HERE IN BLIGHTY...

Words by David Bulmer Photos by Suttty

When Mel Pocock made his GP debut as a 15-year-old in 2008 it was obvious that he wasn't quite ready for world championship competition and for most of the year he struggled to make the cut to get into Sunday's points-paying

motos. After another couple of years spent struggling to make much impact at world championship level, Mel changed teams to TAS Suzuki and decided to concentrate on the British championship instead in an effort to rebuild his reputation.

With that mission accomplished Mel moved back under the Dixon Monster Energy Yamaha awning for 2012 and after an amazing summer is now the newly crowned European 250 champion. He

was also runner-up in the British MX2 championship although that's actually seen as a something of a disappointment for the youngster affectionately known as Ginge...

DBR: Let's start with the British championship first... coming into 2012 what were you hoping to achieve?
MP: "I've only really had scattered

podiums in the British championship in the past so my main goal this year was to try and get on the podium at every round if I could. Finishing the first round second overall behind Zach was pretty sweet. I knew that Zach wasn't doing the whole championship so in my eyes I was leading the championship already and from then on I could see that I could be in with a fair shot at winning this."

DBR: But it didn't all go so smoothly...

MP: "There were definitely some ups and downs in the British championship and I don't know whether I was just unlucky, or if I'm disliked, or if the team or maybe Steve [Dixon] is disliked by the ACU but we had a nightmare."

"At Milton Malsor I clipped one of the posts that they've got at the schoolboy track that they run us at. We should never, ever go to that place even for a minibike race let alone a British championship. Anyway, I hit a post and pulled over for three or four straight seconds to check my bike was okay and got penalised a minute in qualifying for stopping on the track so I got put straight on the outside gate."

"The start straight isn't very long there and it's also hard to pass. I had a terrible weekend and basically lost 35 points on Elliott [Banks-Browne]. That was really a nightmare. I managed to

>>





The battle between Mel and EBB raged all summer



The red plate goes great with Mel's red hair

grab a load of points back at Hawkstone and got back hold of the championship lead and set out to win the championship from then on out – like try to be consistent with what I do and try to be on the podium at every race. So I did that and that brought us to the last round.”

DBR: So going into the last round you're 16 points up – what happened?

MP: “I had a bike issue in race one that lost me a clear 25 points on Elliott. That was a pretty dangerous situation to be in because the last race of the day was a mixed capacity one as well and you have to qualify to even get into the last race. So if I didn't win the second race I wouldn't have even got into the final race and I would have completely blown it. I went out in the second race and battled hard with Elliott and managed to win the race and take a one point lead into the last moto.”

DBR: So you basically had to beat Elliott in that last moto to be British champion...

MP: “Yeah. We had a false start in that which was annoying because I'd got away really well –

I think I was in third and I knew that Elliott had gone down in the first corner. Anyway, they red-flagged it because Bradshaw hit the gate – this rickety 20-year-old start gate that 20 million sidecars have hit over the years – and so half of them didn't go down.

“When they re-ran it Elliott got the holeshot while I was in about seventh place and battling people like Brad Anderson and Alex Snow – basically people I don't really need to be racing for the MX2 championship when I've got a one point lead. Stribbos gave me a pretty gnarly shunt in the second corner and I lost quite a lot of places and then he just sat behind Elliott the whole race – the whole 35 minutes – and if anyone tried to pass he was basically just being a nuisance. I lost the championship on the last race – it was a clear display of teamwork with Stribbos just following Elliott home.”

DBR: So how did that feel generally? What were you thinking when you came off the track?

MP: “For one I wanted to beat Stribbos' head in for what he'd done to me in the second corner. We had no team tactics going into that race.

Shaun [Simpson] was going into that race to win and I was going into that race to win – there was nothing really said. I congratulated Elliott for winning but went back to the truck a pretty upset Ginge.”

DBR: Was it Elliott and his team's fault or do you think the whole way the championship run was to blame – having the MX1 and MX2 guys in the same race?

MP: “Elliott's not to blame. He did well. He won. But I think having the MX1/MX2 mixed race is a stupid idea and having it at the last round for the last race of the year even more so... I know they did it years ago but we're in the 21st century. It never works in the MX2 riders' favour at all. How can it when we're at places like Hawkstone and we're racing against 450s with the hill there and stuff like that? Having that mixed race at the final round was just a nightmare. I hope next year they take it away or score it separately so the leading MX2 rider still has a 25 point win.”

DBR: Moving on from that, you had much better success in the European



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The Maxxis title slipped away at Little Silver

MEET GINGE!

**SAY HELLO TO POCOCK'S THROTTLE
TWISTING ALTER EGO...**

"Ginge is just a nickname that Jon Giffard – he was the first mechanic I had working for me – gave me from when I was back on the 85s. We had such a close friendship and still do now. He always used to call me Ginge because I got bullied for it at school so I don't know what his thinking was – I guess he thought that if he started calling me it I'd get used to it and then it wouldn't bother me. It was the best thing that ever happened. If I was to get offended every time someone called me ginger I would have hung myself by now so I see it as a good thing.

"Ginge comes out on race day and when I see myself on TV or see video footage of me riding I don't think that's me – I'm a normal family kid – and that's Ginge riding there. Obviously it's me who's doing it but when I'm going around it doesn't feel like I'm going any faster than what I did 10 years ago. But when I see it on TV and watch myself go around a corner and I think, 'whoa, did I really just go around and do something like that?'. I think it's a good nickname and I'm proud to have it. Now I'm legitimate Ginge. Everyone knows me as that."



Pocock's holeshot at the Dutch GP surprised many – himself included!

Championship. What was the game plan going into that championship? Why did you do it?

MP: "I spoke to Steve Dixon after my year with TAS Suzuki. I said to him that I wanted to do the Europeans. I didn't feel like I was up for the GPs and we both sat down with my dad and we decided to go ahead and do them. I barely even knew that championship existed and I don't think many people in England knew that it existed either. But this year they were running it alongside the GPs and we could see great potential of running in it – all the teams are there and there were people from Yamaha there too. It was good to get coverage in that way. So we decided to set out and do that championship. By all means I didn't think I could win it but I didn't know who was going to race in it. I went in there with an open mind to see what I could do."

DBR: You went out and won the first six motos and then the gossip started about you shouldn't actually be doing it as you were a backup GP

rider with Zach and Arnaud injured. What did you think about that?

MP: "First GP round I had a 10th overall at Valkenswaard and had a seventh overall in Portugal and that completely blew my mind away. I don't think Steve and everyone involved in the team thought I could do that well in a GP and this is before the European series had even started.

"So, I moved into the European championship and won the first six races. A lot of people were saying that I shouldn't have been in there because I'd done so well in the GPs. There were a lot of comments that I was sandbagging the Europeans. The boys in the Europeans gave me a fair run for my money though and I didn't win every race and I didn't win every overall. I was probably the fastest there but they did push me. I was there to win like the other riders. But it was such a great feeling to be on top of the podium so many times at such a high level. It's something I'll never forget."

DBR: The summer was really good for British sport with the Olympics and then Tommy Searle doing well in the MX2 class – how much fun was it to be riding out there?

MP: "When you're winning you're on a high and things start to snowball and then they keep snowballing. I think at one point I won four weekends in a row and it was the best feeling I've ever had in motocross. I've never enjoyed racing a motocross bike so much in all my life. I actually got up in the morning and was looking forward to going riding and racing. Training with Tommy and Zach was awesome and it was probably the best time I've had riding a bike. It sounds weird because I've ridden them for so long but this year I've just had so much fun and actually been able to win and be happy with what I'm doing.

"I was so fit too. I've got a new trainer – Kirk Gibbons – that I've worked pretty closely with since November last year along with Tommy and also Elliott. He's brought all three of us >>

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on leaps and bounds. Huge credit to him for what he's done to me as a rider and a person. He's changed the way that I think and put belief in me that I can win when I get on a bike. He's pretty special with stuff like that."

DBR: When you got handed the gold plate Zach and the whole team were there to celebrate with you – what's it been like having 'the real 338' as a team-mate?

MP: "Zach has been a star. I met him when I was 15 and back then I was like 10th in the British Championship. He comes over and obviously he's pretty professional and he opened up my eyes on what you can do on a bike – he's pretty mad on a bike. I learned a lot from him and I've been out to America a good two or three times now riding and training in the winter."

"Obviously I've got Tommy around me as well. I wouldn't say I've used them – because they're obviously two of my best mates – but I've learned a lot from them and I want to be like them. I want what Zach's got and I want what Tommy's got. This last year or so I've just worked so I can have that. It's pretty sweet really. To have those mates around you that you can go out and have a laugh night or day or do whatever and be able to learn so much from them."

DBR: And now after winning the EMX championship you've signed a new contract with Steve and the team. What is the deal there?

MP: "I've got two years with a third year option with Steve but I'm backed by Factory Yamaha which is through Laurens Klein Koerkamp who is basically Steve's boss. I'm proud to have a ride

like that and it makes it all the better that I'm not moving teams – I'm staying exactly where I am. I'm going to be on the same bikes but better and the best bit is the team's based just an hour down the road."

DBR: And what do you hope to achieve next year in the GPs?

MP: "I'm going to set realistic goals like I do every year. I'd like to be a consistent top eight runner. Top six overall would be a good weekend or if I can maybe get it on the podium once or twice... or even just have that shot of racing up there – that's my goal. I'm not going to blow smoke up my own ass and say I'm going to do this and that – I'd much rather set realistic goals that I can achieve rather than say to myself I'm going to be on the podium every weekend because that's not going to happen. Even the best guys can't do that. I'm going to say that I want to be a top eight rider and a good day would be a top six overall. If I could achieve getting on the podium maybe once that would be amazing."

DBR: Are you excited about these overseas races going to Brazil, Thailand, Mexico and now Qatar?

MP: "Yeah, I can't wait. I really can't wait. My friends here who aren't into racing say they'd love to go travelling and I'm like that's what I'm going to be doing next year. And I'm going to be racing a bike and I'm going to be with my mates. I really can't wait. It's going to be sick. It's a kid's dream to travel the world racing a bike with your mates."



★ ★ ★

A B I T O F

HISTORY REPEATING!

**SOME 31 YEARS AFTER THE USA
TOOK LOMMEL BY STORM THE BELGIAN
SANDPIT SERVES UP ANOTHER SHOCK
RESULT AT THIS YEAR'S MXDN...**

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Sarah Gutierrez, Nuno Laranjeira and Steve Cox

The fat target that sits firmly on the back of Team USA for roughly two days a year was smartly hit for the 66th Motocross des Nations. We all know by now what happened through the sand of Lommel in Belgium and for those well acquainted with the sport, grand prix riders and the punishing terrain of the popular training venue knew – from the moment it was announced that Eric Geboers and his small crew had motocross' flagship event in their hands – that this would be the event of reckoning for off-road racing's superpower.

The odds were against the Americans. Lommel could have provided an eighth consecutive victory that would have ranked as one of their very best in a slew of 22 or it could

have seen them knocked from the top step by any one of the countries that make a viable attempt every 12 months – namely France, Belgium and since 2010, Germany.

The Germans will rightly cherish their landmark achievement at Lommel for the next 340-odd days until they have to face some validation in front of their home fans at Teutschenthal. The names of Roczen (MXdN class winner for the past three years now, MX2 world champion in 2011 and rising star of the AMA scene), Nagl (who has spent a third of his lifetime living in Lommel) and Schiffer (recovering from yet another injury but an accomplished sand rider) have been cemented in German motocross folklore and continue to add a pulse to a sport that is on the rise in their country with packed attendances at >>







Herlings holehots the MX2/Open moto



Ken Roczen leads Germany to victory



BATTLEGROUND!

WHAT MAKES LOMMEL SO TOUGH?

The sand was exactly how you'd expect it to be – rough, rutty and unrelenting. The dry weather added a harder, more compact texture to it but this was still a different type of motocross. The layout changes allowed more speed and flow but this was something Lommel has always needed as the natural pace would be dictated by the bumps – there is no need for short and tight corners.

In previous visits to Lommel the sand has proved to be receptive to rain and consequently worked deeper, the surface was not the normal fare on this occasion. "Normally I really like the sand here but the track was not how it usually is," explained Max Nagl. "The bumps were really short and sharp and it was difficult for the bike set-up."

The Americans offered up some insight too. "We came over here a bit early to try and prepare for the sand because over in the USA we don't really have anything like this – other than on public beaches and definitely no riding there," claimed Blake Baggett.

"I made a few mistakes and you cannot be doing that," revealed Dungey. "I know the next time we come to this track and if I'm on the team then I will be more ready. There is a certain technique [for sand] that with more and more time you can develop. I'm not making excuses... there were things that other riders were doing better. It is a condition I need to spend more time in and I think it would improve areas of my programme."

Only Tony Cairoli can stop Herlings from dominating

BRITISH BATTLEERS!

OUR BOYS PICK UP A GREAT EIGHTH IN RELENTLESS BELGIAN SAND...

Britain finished eighth overall and despite Tommy Searle's publicly stated hopes of a podium beforehand this was a lukewarm and fairly realistic slot in the classification. Searle is not the biggest fan of the sand, Jake Nicholls knows Lommel best and his Belgian Nestaan KTM team are based practically on the same industrial estate and Max Antie obtained his only trophy of a turbulent MX2 year on similar terrain at Lierop.

This was Neil Prince's first handling of the team for one of the quieter and more focussed attempts in recent years. His choice of Anstie on the Honda CRF450R for MX3 led to GB's second best result of ninth and partially vindicated the decision to leave out Shaun Simpson even though the Scot probably knows Lommel as well as anyone having been based in the area for the better part of seven years.

Nicholls' mechanical DNF in the second moto was not the only time a smoking KTM was spotted at the side of the track and served to remind onlookers that Lommel is as hard on machinery as it is on the muscles and the mind.

Britain had two members of the team that picked themselves through excellent 2012 racing campaigns for Searle and Nicholls and Anstie's trawl through the pack to that ninth place in the second moto was another vivid display of his motorcycle handling skill. There wasn't much drama for Team Great Britain at Lommel and effort and dedication were high on the scale. Like Team USA the results and depths of speed through the sand were on different levels and the Brits tried to fit in where they could.

★ ★ ★



Anstie proves he was the right man for the job



Jake Nicholls and Tommy Searle both rode well but lacked a certain something

Teutschenthal for the grand prix last year and this September. A bold project at the Lausitzring motorsport complex has sprung up to capitalise on the hot German MX love affair for 2013 in terms of the GP as Teutschenthal prepares for an overload with the Nations.

Depending on your nationality or favouritism Lommel meant the crowning of new kings or the temporary deposing of supreme ones. The feeling post-race was that people were just as excited about one as they were the other – the full Ryder Cup effect coming into play for the current generation of fans who will have to think hard for a moment to try and remember a time when the Stars and Stripes were not wrapped around the gaggle of individuals on the highest plinth of the podium.

The Americans were gracious in defeat but also quick to remind that they'd been performing on an unfamiliar stage and one harshly lit towards their co-stars. Everf several days of prep beforehand were not enough for the 1-2-3

numbered bikes to be able to run with the likes of Cairoli and Herlings.

Of course Team USA have always been able to count on arguably the strongest trio of racers at each Motocross des Nations and among the roll-call of Carmichael, Stewart, Villopoto, Dungey, Weimer, Baggett, Windham, Tedesco, Ferry and more that have contributed to those seven triumphs since 2005 there have always been some strong individual results that have given the squad a vital push when needed.

In Lommel they were clearly looking at the percentage-game, well aware that world champions Cairoli and Herlings were likely to set the pace but for the Chamberlain trophy Italy and Holland were not likely contenders. Oddly enough it was Justin Barcia who posted their best finish with third in the final moto. The Nations rookie was perhaps controversially selected by Roger DeCoster over the likes of Mike Alessi but the Honda rider's sand acumen proved a valuable asset even if his

>>

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE OTHERS!

THE MXDN'S STAND OUT STARS...

Tony Cairoli and Jeffrey Herlings swept all three motos with the MX1 world champion comfortably owning two to the Dutchman's single win. Herlings came into the meeting with all the hype after his lapping-spree to third and second positions at his home GP in Lierop earlier that month.

Although the European section of the press corps were already talking up the duel between the KTM riders, the 30 minutes and two laps where they did face-off was a strange beast. The records will show that Cairoli grabbed his second chequered flag of the day but only those there will remember how Herlings picked up his 350SX-F after a first lap crash and closed down a gap of more than 20 positions and almost 20 seconds to reach Cairoli's rear wheel.

But in the final phases Cairoli was able to push and Herlings understandably had nothing left. The Motocross des Nations has not always been the kindest to Cairoli. Superlative victories like that of 2006 at Matterley or against Chad Reed in a 30 minute nail-biter in Italy 2009 that still rank as my favourite races after 12 years in the GP paddock have been mixed with customs border control problems (USA 2007) and crashes and injury (France 2005 and 2011).

Lommel was an emphatic way to closedown arguably his best ever racing season. He won the last seven GPs of the MX1 term – dropping just three points from a maximum 350 – and was on another level regardless of the terrain or the conditions. Asked if his victory in the MX1 class in Belgium ranks as his best outing in Italian colours he had to say, "Actually no. I think Matterley Basin in 2006 was one of the first highlights of my career and I was really happy with that race. On the sand I know my speed is good and I knew only Jeffrey is close to me. We could fight together. From the fifth or fourth lap in that last moto I saw that he was third and found out afterwards he had crashed on the first lap – that was unbelievable. I managed to fight back and beat him to the end."

LOW POINTS FROM LOMMEL...

Amongst all the good stuff there were a couple of low moments n'all. Politics tend to effect events like the Nations that sees groups from different brands, companies and camps trying to work together in a short time and for a short time. The personality differences that kept Carlos Campano out of the Spanish team after an 11th hour injury for Jonathan Barragan bordered on the absurd and the country duly didn't qualify from the B-Final. Campano would likely have had factory Yamaha support and to make matters worse was actually in attendance at Lommel.

Team Puerto Rico suffered through the thigh injury to Jimmy Albertson two days before the event and the Nations motos were ultimately denied the presence of Zach Osborne and late call-up Kyle Chisholm.

I also think France will have been disappointed with their final classification of sixth considering the wealth of ability they normally have at their disposal and the selection of Xavier Boog (10th and 16th) might come under the microscope as the French rarely looked in contention for a trophy... Gautier Paulin did help his country to a win in the Karting of Nations pre-event on Friday night however.

AND THE REST...

Team Belgium stood a content middle ground with Clement Desalle providing the pick of results, De Dycker animating the fans and Jeremy Van Horebeek ensuring nails were bitten after his second moto mechanical failure. Team Manager Joel Smets recalled leaving Lommel in 1981 as an angry 12 year old when the USA won the first of their train of victories and although America was denied on this occasion the Belgian quartet wore the classic 'close but not close enough' look of the runner-up.

Full credit to New Zealander Josh Coppins who dragged his country into the A-Final and at the age of 35 ended up riding three motos in one day across Lommel – you couldn't have asked for a harder swansong to his career. "It was a tough track but it reminded me there is no chance of another comeback! After that second race I was so tired I was thinking 'no, never again,'" he said. Coppins finalised his brief stint in the injury-plagued Monster Energy Yamaha team but the association with 'blue' will continue with the former GP winner due to take up a testing and development role for the firm in New Zealand and also with the Rinaldi camp in Italy.

Fellow Antipodeans Australia knew there was slim chance of repeating their maiden podium celebrations from 2011 with none of the Reed, Byrne, Metcalfe axis in place. A younger outfit saw promising potential from the likes of Todd Waters and Luke Styke turning heads at Lommel.

On a side note there was a positive reception to Monster Energy Yamaha's Ben Popperwell being award the 'Mechanic of the Year' gong at the FIM prize-giving do Saturday night. Zach Osborne's spanner-man has been a centrifugal force of Steve Dixon's crew throughout 2012 supervising SX success, coping with numerous rider changes and marshalling the team through MX Festivals and Dixon's back problems.

Cairoli killed 'em in both his motos





Justin Barcia was Team USA's stand out star on the day

hasty and all-action approach would also come hand-in-hand.

At one moment it looked as though the US might not even make the podium as the 20 year old skidded into the pit-lane with a locked front wheel courtesy of broken spokes. Only some quick repair work got him back on track on the final lap of the second race and turned a 33 point lead-weight into a more manageable 14.

"The track was definitely not like anything I have ridden in my life before," said Barcia whose scraps with Belgium's Ken De Dycker provided some of the best action scenes from the weekend. "Nothing can compare to this. It is never-ending – the huge bumps and crazy sand. I thought it was hard back home! The guys over here are so talented and we tried our best to keep up with them and race them – that's how it goes down."

Trackside it was fascinating to see athletes

like Dungey and Baggett humanised by the sand. We're talking about AMA champions, superb technical racers that have dealt with a full supercross campaign and the sweltering climes of the outdoors. Dungey swapped-off the KTM at the end of the waves section in the first race and Baggett was at one stage so far down the order it was an effort just to track his progress. Both looked out of sorts and tense compared to the loose and drifting styles of Cairoli, Herlings and the three Germans but as they pointed out this was alien territory.

On the other side of the fence the fans flocked to one of the more unfriendly-spectator circuits to have entertained a grand prix in recent years. Limited viewing possibilities and a hefty trackside barrier further obscured proceedings, although this was partially alleviated by the provision of the big-screen TVs. As expected there was a splash of colour, costume and

languages (big shout to the British unitard group) and an excited vibe about Lommel that only the Nations can bring.

It was hard to get around the paddock on Sunday due to the volume of public and the Saturday gathering would have provided a decent gate return for a GP. Motocross has been lucky on a couple of occasions in 2012, significantly with the reversal of the rain that nearly submerged Bastogne for the Belgian GP and the dry skies that prevented Matterley Basin's Festival from sliding into the bowl but the sunny spells for the Nations were an added plus for this extravagant spectacle.

With new winners, reinvigorated Americans and extra interest from other countries – Team Thailand were unsuccessful debutants – the Nations continues its upwards trend and a path to wider recognition that will lead to Latvia and the United States in the coming years.

CAN'T WIN 'EM ALL!

TEAM USA'S STORY STRAIGHT FROM THE SANDBOX...

Words by Steve Cox

The first time Team USA won the Motocross des Nations was in 1981. Prior to that Great Britain had won the event 15 times, Belgium nine times and Sweden seven times. Since then though, USA has won 22 times including 13 in a row from 1981 to 1993.

USA sat out following 9/11 in 2001, then again in 2002 and 2004 but when the USA returned in 2005 the team went on a winning streak yet again winning seven in a row.

It's almost unfair, actually. The USA has a huge riding/racing population and two of the premier racing series in the world – including the indisputable king of motocross sport, the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series. The USA also has over 300 million people compared to countries like Belgium who have a population of 11 million people.

But you really can't win them all and there would be no reason to actually run the races if the results were guaranteed.

The latest win streak actually required a lot of things go Team USA's way to stay intact. In 2005 Kevin Windham had to ride a severely bent CRF450R to the chequered flag to hold things together. In 2006 Team USA had to rely on Ivan Tedesco riding Ricky Carmichael's bike – and Ivan had only ridden one outdoor race all year long. Luckily, Tedesco is a good starter. In 2008, Timmy Ferry had to come through for Team USA when James Stewart tried to toss it away. In 2009, Italy may have had it won at their home event if not for a first-turn crash in the final moto that took out Antonio Cairoli.

The thing is, even with the advantages afforded to Team USA just by pure demographics, plenty of things have had to go right for them to pull off seven in a row like they did recently. And the same can be said for the streak of 13 in the '80s and '90s.

There's a saying that 'luck is where opportunity meets preparation'. Maybe this is true but it doesn't take away from the luck that Team USA has had over the years.

All this being said there's one thing that turned out to be the great equalizer and many in the GP paddock knew this going into the event – the Lommel track itself. Sand in the USA is not anything like the sand that Team USA ran into when they got to Europe.

"That was probably 85 per cent of it," said team manager and Belgian Roger DeCoster. "We never have racing conditions that are anything close to that. We went there 10 days early. We spent some time on the track but not enough to know what the Europeans were used to racing. You look at the guys that were fast on the track and it's the guys that live right by the track.

"Antonio Cairoli lives right there in Lommel most of the season. The same thing with Jeffrey Herlings. Ken Roczen rode really well also. He spent a lot of time there because the Teka Suzuki team he rode for is right there in Lommel. He spent a lot of time there riding the sand as well. And the two other German guys, one grew up right by a sand pit where we actually went to practice one day. We have no conditions like that. I didn't expect that the gap would be as big as it was. I thought that as a team we could still do it. They were better than us and that's why they were able to do it. They deserved the win."

And none of this was a surprise to DeCoster. This is why the team went to Europe fully 10 days ahead of the Motocross des Nations event – to get used to the different conditions.

"I knew, otherwise I wouldn't have asked the guys to go there as early," DeCoster said. "That's the first time we've gone this early except for the first time we went there when we won the first time [in 1981]. So I expected it to be tough. I don't think that our riders realized before they went there how different the conditions were.

"It's almost like if you reverse the situation and then the Europeans come and ride a supercross here and

come and practice three times on a supercross track and then try to win. It's pretty much similar. It requires so much different riding style, those conditions and different bike setup also. You need more time. They did a good job. That track is the best track they could have picked anywhere in the world to increase their chances of winning. And they did."

DeCoster says that even Ryan Dungey's bike settings were good. They were the same as the rest of the KTM racers' but his riding style wasn't.

"I think it's simply that we are not used to the conditions," DeCoster said. "The way we ride our bikes, we ride a lot more with the weight on the front wheel and that comes a lot from supercross and riding a lot of hard-pack conditions. So everybody is used to that style of riding and that's what works in America.

"For Lommel you needed to ride basically on the back wheel on the whole track and let the front just glide over the top of the sand. But you need to steer the bike with the back. You cannot change your style in three practice days. I think our guys improved and with a little more time I'm sure we could be in there. But it's like even with the bikes, even with the same settings as the Euro guys, still our guys are not accustomed to ride with those settings, so it takes time to perform at the top, to learn to ride that kind of setting also.

"In Dungey's case we rode the same settings as the European riders did and it takes more than the settings. We're on the same bike and in every race there were two KTMs on the podium individually. We had a KTM and we were not able to match them."

Even with all of the disadvantages from the conditions the racers weren't used to there were still a few things that could've gone Team USA's way and helped the team take the win. In the past they may have gone Team USA's way but this time they didn't.

"If we had gotten lucky with a few things, maybe..."

DeCoster said. "If Germany had lost Roczen or something like that, that could have helped. Belgium got second but they lost one result – that would have been better. They could have won the overall. With Jeremy van Horebeek he DNFed one moto and he was in fifth position when he did so they would have had a better score.

"We would have had to be lucky and the other guys would have had to have had some bad luck for us to win – the way we performed. Barcia had some speed and he really tried hard but it was also he made the mistake when he collided with Ken de Dycker. It was his mistake. Even on the inside he came in a little bit too hot and passed the mechanics' area and bumped into De Dycker – he's a huge guy so he was the last guy he should have bumped."

In the end Team USA lost. And this is probably a good thing for the event. If Team USA would've won on conditions that were so much in favour of the GP regulars then the rivalry at the event would diminish considerably.

"Winning is awesome and losing sucks," reckoned Team USA's Blake Baggett. "That's the bottom line – nobody likes to lose. Nobody goes anywhere to lose. If you're coming somewhere to lose then why go? We came here to win. We did the best we could and we just didn't cut it. Third is... There are many countries that haven't got on the box or even in the top five. All these countries over here are gunning for us. Hands down we didn't beat two of them, but we beat every other one. We'll just go home and it will be in the back of our mind, but we've got to move on.

"You won't know what it's like until you've done it. It's gnarly. It's like nothing you've ever done. That's the gnarliest track I've ever ridden. I don't care what backyard sand track, hill track, track in the neck of the woods you rode – I guarantee it's like an ant farm compared to this place. This place is brutal. We did the best we could. I felt like I gave it everything I had. It just didn't go our way."

Ryan Dungey's a disappointment



Blake Baggett battles hard but ultimately fails to master the sand



RESULTS

MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS

1	Germany	Max Nagl, Ken Roczen, Marcus Schiffer	25
2	Belgium	Clement Desalle, Jeremy van Horebeek, Ken de Dycker	29
3	USA	Ryan Dungey, Blake Baggett, Justin Barcia	39
4	The Netherlands	Marc de Reuver, Glenn Coldenhoff, Jeffrey Herlings	44
5	Italy	Antonio Cairoli, Alessandro Lupino, Davide Guarneri	45
6	France	Gautier Paulin, Marvin Musquin, Xavier Boog	47
7	Estonia	Tanel Leok, Priit Ratsep, Gert Krestinov	56
8	Great Britain	Tommy Searle, Jake Nicholls, Max Anstie	56



Few dabs from Dibs helped
Team GB score second



SPAIN REIGN!

TONI BOU AND LAIA SANZ LEAD THE SPANISH ARMADA TO VICTORY AT THE TRIALS DES NATIONS AS BOTH THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAM DESTROY THE OPPOSITION...

Words and photos by G2F Media



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Adam Raga leaps to victory with the Spanish squad

Each of the off-road disciplines has a dominant nation. France currently rules the world of enduro and cleaned up at the ISDE while the Americans have done a pretty good job of making the MXdN their own in more recent times although Germany failed to read the script this year. Then in the slower and more delicate sport of trials Spain has become the country to beat over the last decade both in the individual and team pursuits.

The 29th edition of the FIM Trial des Nations – held in the sleepy town of Moutier on the edge of the Swiss mountains – provided to be the perfect platform for Spain's men and women to reconfirm themselves as the undisputed best of the best.

Fresh from making it five wins from five starts

in the Women's world championship Sanz was in excellent form as she captained Spain's female squad. Joined by Sandra Gomez and Mireia Conde the team was perfectly poised to fight for a third successive team trophy.

Great Britain's trio of lovely ladies consisting of Emma Bristow, Rebekah Cook and Donna Fox, posed the main threat to bringing Spain's winning run to an end with Britain having been the last nation to depose the Spanish back in 2009. The wet and muddy conditions that lay in wait under the trees on the hillsides that surrounded the town looked to have boosted Bristow and co's chances with the going being decidedly British.

Rain showers throughout the event could have also served to upset the Spanish trio although in reality Sanz and her girls were not

at all perturbed by the slippery hazards and managed to pull two marks clear of the Brits on the first lap. Britain really upped their effort over the final lap of 14 sections but failed to reduce the gap as Spain stayed strong enough to extend their winning margin to five marks come the end of the day.

This was Spain's third win in a row in the Women's category and their sixth in total since the inception of the female class back in 2000. Britain rounded out the competition as the bridesmaids once again with the French line up of Marilyne Journet, Sandrine Juffet and Pauline Masanes completing the podium.

When you consider that the Spanish male team was made up of the current top four riders in the world championship their victory was never really in doubt. Lead by the current champ Toni Bou the Spanish squad also included Adam Raga, Jeroni Fajardo and Albert Cabestany. With nothing but another win on the cards the only unanswered questions were who was going to be second and how far behind would they be after the two laps of 18 sections?

As with the Women's event it was Great Britain who dutifully stepped forward to take on the role as Spain's main challengers. With the legendary Dougie Lampkin no longer considered as suitable for inclusion by the team selectors it was James Dabill who this time captained team GB that also starred Jack Challoner, Michael Brown and Alexz Wigg. In reality only a miracle – and a miracle much bigger than the one that we saw on the closing day of the Ryder cup – was going to see our British boys take gold despite their best efforts.

The writing was already on the wall as the first lap punch cards were handed in – Spain having ridden themselves 56 points clear of Dabill and his boys at the halfway point. Although Bou and co were well out of reach, Britain had company in the form of Italy who after a spirited opening performance were within 13 marks of our boys. Sensing the threat team GB rallied well over the final 18 sections to pull comfortably clear of their Italian rivals come the finish.

A hefty 98 marks defined Spain's ninth win in a row at the Trial des Nations with little to suggest that they will not make it a decade of triumphs when the competition visits France next September. With Great Britain and the Italian team of Matteo Grattarola, Francesco Lolitta, Fabio Lenzi and Daniele Maurino taking the last two rostrum places the French squad – who finished fourth – will be hoping for better things when they ride in front of their home fans in 2013.

HOPE BUT NO GLORY!

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE BRITAIN GREAT?

After a summer that's seen so much success for our British athletes – none more so than at the London Olympics – Team GB may have headed to the Swiss hills in the hope that they might also experience some glory of their own. The British Women's TdN team should have travelled into Europe with the most hope as their last success in this competition came in 2009, some six years more recently than the boys who last lifted the TDN trophy way back in 2003.

Far from these being a direct reflection on any of the individuals who have represented 'Queen and Country' over the last decade the lack of recent glory has to be balanced against the lack of investment that the British team has experienced compared to its European counterparts. Spain, France and Italy have all heavily invested in the development of their young and emerging riders via their national federations over the last decade while closer to home the same can't be said.

The results that British cycling and athletics have achieved speak volumes and while it does involve money it more importantly requires a vision and a goal. Be it trials, enduro or motocross – all of which Britain used to rule at one time or another – we need much more than a van full of individuals and a kit bag packed with hope if the glory days are ever to return.

The Fantastic Four prepare for battle



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SECOND COMING!

AFTER SEEMINGLY STALLING FOLLOWING HIS ONE GP VICTORY, GERT KRESTINOV'S CAREER IS NOW RIGHT BACK ON TRACK AND HIS LIFE IS JUST PEACHY OFF IT N'ALL...

Words by Ed Bradley Photos by Suttty

The hot topic when the Americans came over for this year's MXdN was how unprepared they were for how brutal the Lommel circuit can be – even Antonio Cairoli was making comments about this unique track and how gnarly it gets. Surprisingly, one man who knows about Lommel better than most is MVR-D Honda's Estonian star Gert Krestinov.

Way back in 2008 Gert lived just a stone's throw away from the facility and trained there regularly with Dutch former world champ John van den Berk. When the Belgian GP came around that August this tall, happy-go-lucky Estonian produced a performance that would not only leave everybody shocked on the day but also place high expectations on him in the future.

Gert still recalls that Sunday as being one of the best of his life. "Everything was perfect going into that race," he says. "I'd done a lot of hard training so I knew I was fit, I had great bikes, a great team and friends, it was my 18th birthday and I had also just met my beautiful girlfriend Sandra so I was on a real high. My goal was to finish inside the top 10 which was something I hadn't done in a GP yet. In the first race I came from last to finish eighth and although I was happy I knew I could do better.

"I got a decent start in the second race and was third after the first lap even though I was just riding steady. I thought I'd like to lead so I pulled two passes and went to the front. It was great being in front of everybody and then I started

thinking 'let's see how many laps I can lead for.' A lap would pass, then another and another and the gap kept getting bigger – it ended up that no one could catch me. The feeling of leading a GP race definitely knocked a couple of seconds off my lap times! Crossing the finish line first was amazing and I wasn't even bothered about whether I'd got the overall because I was over the moon with the race win – to get the overall was a great bonus."

While Gert's latest visit to Lommel for the MXdN was not quite as successful he still scored a really respectable 10th overall in the talent-stacked MX1 class. However, being super self-critical that's a performance he's really not happy with... "At the des Nations I just wasn't riding to my full potential. I know I can be better than that and I just need to spend more time riding in Belgium with the other fast guys to get that confidence in sand back. When I'm riding in the UK a lot of the time I'm just training against the stopwatch but I really like having someone to ride with.

"For the GP there in 2008 I was prepared completely differently. I was really focused to do well in sand that year – not just at Lommel but on all sand tracks. Most of the time I was training in sand and I felt really strong and comfortable. I was riding really nice and smooth and I was hitting everything perfect and I don't know why I haven't ridden that good since then – I guess I need to start training in Lommel again!"

After Gert won there were some gossips >>

Krestinov's move to MVR-D Honda really paid off with third in the Maxxis series

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Gert's been a main player in this year's Red Bull Pro Nationals



who claimed that his bike had a 290cc engine which is of course bull. The result just proves that 'good luck' is where preparation meets opportunity.

Gert comes from a racing family and his work ethic and never-give-up attitude comes from his dad whose determination to race on the world stage at a time when it was hard to get out of the Soviet Union – yet alone to race motocross – is mind blowing! "My dad was the best rider in Estonia in the 1980s," Gert says proudly. "He was chosen to race with the Soviet team to do GPs and his best result was a seventh in 1986. He worked really hard and has so many stories which he's told me as I've grown up. One of them is when the KGB was following him when he went to see a friend in Sweden who had escaped from the Soviet Union. The KGB followed riders all the time because they were scared that the riders would escape and never to return. My dad was so lucky to see

western Europe and wear all the modern clothes – in fact he made quite good money by selling cool-brand stuff in Estonia."

Long since retired from racing Gert's dad now successfully coaches the new generation of MX riders in Estonia and they've had some great results in the 65cc European championship. Gert's introduction to motocross was also quite dramatic as he was barely out of nappies! "I started racing at a really young age – I was three years old! Of course, I didn't really know what racing really was, it was just playing for me. I had to get a kiss from my mom before the race and my nose wiped after. After a couple of years things got more serious and I won some championships.

"At one race when I was six a hobby guy got out of control and hit me – I crashed and landed on my shoulder. Nobody thought anything of it until six months after when my mom saw it getting smaller every day. I had operations but

it didn't help a lot. My shoulder has no delta muscle so it looks really tiny and I've learned to compensate with other muscles."

Knowing this the next time you watch Gert ride you'll notice that his right arm is often tucked in and his style is a little unconventional compared to the textbook attack-position. But nevertheless Gert has still created a very efficient and super-smooth technique that allows him to carry a lot of speed – "I think this injury effected my riding style because now when I'm riding my bike I hold it really strong with my legs and knees so my mechanic has to change seat covers almost every race – I need a big budget for seat covers!"

For 2009 there was a quick move to MX1 which was the beginning of a really tough season. "I switched to the MX1 class and maybe it was too soon but I was already a really big guy and too heavy for the MX2 bike. It was a difficult season and I had a lot of mechanical problems – I DNFed about 50 per cent of the races and that wasn't very good for my head."

Gert's very blasé about his run of non-finishes, shrugging them off as something he'd rather forget and not talk about mostly because he's proud of being a successful racer and not finishing races is a big no-no for anybody who loves winning. It takes a tough guy to keep his pecker up when recurring bike failures are stopping him from getting the results he wants but just imagine how hard it is to get your head around your bike breaking in two when landing from a jump – there's no man alive who could walk away from an experience like that and not have confidence issues.

"It happened to me on a downhill jump. My frame broke and it took me a good couple of months to forget about it. I was checking my bike for cracks every time I went out riding and it was hard to deal with. I had an





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Winning at Lommel was a life changing experience

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Representing Estonia at the MXdN



LPE Kawasaki gave Gert his big break in the UK

agreement with the team to stay but in the end it didn't work out and I was left without a ride. After that I got the opportunity to ride for Steve James and the LPE team so I came to the UK."

Since landing in the UK Gert's always been a consistent top-10 runner in the British championship and Red Bull Pro Nationals but this year he's elevated himself even further towards the front since switching to MVR-D Honda. Even so Gert's girlfriend Sandra seems to gets more photos in DBR than he does. Personally I think it's because Sutty has a thing going for her and gets a bit trigger-happy each time she's in sight. But what does Gert reckon? "I'm jealous because I need to be in the magazine too," says Gert. "I guess I need to start winning or something!"

Away from motocross Gert is very aware that his education will play an important part in his life after racing and he spends a considerable amount of time on his schoolwork. Because he left school early he has the opportunity to continue with his education away from the classroom but has to return home for exams.

"I'm always traveling back and forth to Estonia," he explains. "I actually enjoy my time at home because there is a lot of traveling in

my life. I still go to school there and study via the internet but I'm getting close to finishing it now. Racing is my top priority but I want to get the education thing done also."

Gert reportedly scores pretty well in all his tests and his latest exam result is a whopping 97 per cent! In a sport where education seems so easily thrown away as racers chase success from an early age Gert's actually a pretty good role-model although he should concentrate on doing the role and Sandra can be the model.

If you already follow Gert quite closely you'll have noticed that he is continually progressing, amazingly consistent and always willing to fight hard for those last-turn passes. This season has seen the #37 on plenty of podiums – even getting on the top step at the final round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals. But even with some stellar results and two third place finishes wrapped up in the Maxxis and RBPB championships this educated Estonian finds himself without a ride for 2013.

"I'm not sure what my plans are just yet," he says. "Hopefully, I can find a great team and improve my results like I try to every year. My dream would be to race GPs again and hopefully one day that's going to happen."



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ARRIVED.

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Danny McCanney leads the Junior team to a superb second place overall



STERLING SILVER!

A HARD FOUGHT RUNNER-UP RESULT AT THIS YEAR'S ISDE SHOWS THAT OUR NEXT GENERATION OF WOODS RACERS HAVE WELL AND TRULY ARRIVED...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media

Inspire a generation' was the motto that captivated the public's imagination throughout our summer of sport. As we watched many of our beloved Olympic heroes replaced by a new generation of medal hungry athletes, the games introduced a new sway of household names – we witnessed a very public and successful changing of the guard.

At the 87th ISDE in Saxony, Germany the exact same thing happened – Britain's next generation enduro stars stepped out from the shadows of their peers and firmly into the limelight. Some weren't entirely unknown but as a team they put Britain on the international enduro map in no uncertain terms. What they lacked in age and experience they made up for in sheer grit, determination and outright speed. The boys did us proud...

For the second consecutive year Great Britain showed itself as one of the world's top enduro nations as far as future talent is concerned. After the breakthrough successes of GB's Junior World Trophy team securing a third place podium result at the 2011 ISDE in Finland they arrived at

this year's six days in Germany determined and confident of placing higher. And they didn't disappoint.

Last year's result in Heinola, Finland was unexpected but it was proof that aside from David Knight's obvious achievements, Britain was emerging as a force to be reckoned with on the world stage. Entering last year's ISDE the young quartet of Danny McCanney, Alex Rockwell, Jonny Walker and Jack Rowland unquestionably all had solid credentials. However, while all had enjoyed relative success at both notional and international level as far as the ISDE was concerned they were an unknown quantity.

Immediately their week got off to the worst possible start. Danny McCanney unceremoniously ended upside down in a river. Although losing more than 45 minutes he salvaged his bike and somehow remained in the race and more importantly kept the team complete. His staying in the event proved crucial. Two days later Jack Rowland suffered mechanical issues of his own which eventually proved terminal but instead of losing two riders, GB's juniors lost just one and with Rockwell and Walker leading the way Britain stayed >>



The boys hold onto their helmets before shooting off

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Jamie Lewis powers through to the finish



Who shot JR? Jonty did!



Steve Holcombe's maiden race overseas proved to be a corker!



on course to secure a well-deserved FIM bronze medal. What happened in Finland were lessons that weren't forgotten leading into Germany.

With all four riders still eligible to compete hopes of a similar or better performance were high. All four riders had improved 10-fold with McCanney and Rockwell at the forefront of the Enduro Junior World Championship, Walker winning the Erzbergrodeo and Rowland finding podium success in the European Enduro Championship.

But when Walker was forced to withdraw from the selection process following a dislocated shoulder the team's strength appeared to have somewhat diminished. Standing in to take his place, Steve Holcombe had yet to race outside of Britain. As the youngest member of the squad, Holcombe hadn't been on the enduro scene too long but it was his dominating performances in this season's Under 19 class of the Husqvarna ACU British Enduro Championship that ultimately put him on team manager Dusty Martin's radar.

"To be honest I was shocked when I got the

call to say I was picked," recalls Holcombe. "Dusty phoned me and asked if I would represent Great Britain on the Junior Trophy team. I wasn't expecting the call whatsoever but he said he liked how I rode and wanted me on the team. It didn't take long to say yes!"

With the young quartet of McCanney, Rockwell, Rowland and Holcombe now selected it was clear that they would have to bring their A-game to Saxony if they wanted repeat success.

Favourites for success are the French team who were winners in 2011. Fielding no less than two Enduro Junior World champions – Mathias Bellino and Jeremy Joly – along with Alexandre Queyreyre and Kevin Rohmer it was obvious the defending ISDE champions would be hard to beat but not impossible to beat. Joly, like Holcombe would make his ISDE debut and while Jack and Steve had yet to square up against Rohmer and Queyreyre both Alex and Danny had regularly beaten them this season and knew what to expect.

But with strong national teams entered

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TROPHY HUNTERS!

MARTIN'S MAIN MEN FAIL TO HIT THE PODIUM BUT IT'S A STRONG PERFORMANCE NEVERTHELESS...

While the British Junior squad took centre stage, the efforts of Great Britain's World Trophy team were equally creditable. In a class that was filled with nations fielding riders that compete full time on the Enduro World Championship scene, mixing it in at the sharp end of the results was always going to be a tough ask for the Brits. All well versed and experienced in the ISDE – aside from Jamie McCanney who was making his six days debut – finishing on the podium was never really on the agenda. However, placing a solid eighth overall at the end of six tough days of competition and with all six riders securing gold medal finishes there was a lot to be proud of.

TM UK's Jordan Rose overcame some minor jetting issues during day one to end his week inside the top 30 in the individual overall classification. Ending day one as the event's fastest 125cc two-stroke mounted rider in 35th overall, Jamie McCanney fought his way through a heavy dose of hay fever to cap off an incredible ISDE debut ride with an individual 41st position result.

With Honda's Tom Sagar placing a further four minutes behind in 53rd and KTM mounted Jason Thomas another minute back in 57th, Paul Edmondson secured a recording breaking 18th gold medal with a 68th place finish. Lee Edmondson finished 77th with all of the British squad fighting hard for a top 10 result in the World Trophy Team category.

"We always knew the World Trophy team would be a steady squad," summed up pleased team manager Dusty Martin. "It was always going to be a tough ask for them to challenge countries that figure heavily in the Enduro World Championship. Ending the week eighth overall is a very solid result and one we can be all proud of. In total all 10 of our riders have ended the week on gold medal pace and that itself is a feat that not too many nations can brag about. Combined with our Junior team efforts this year's ISDE has been one of the best for Great Britain."



Jamie McCanney's ISDE debut goes great



Lee Edmondson finished in 77th place overall – nine places behind his big brother



MPS Husky's Jack Rowland powers to the finish

from Australia, USA and Italy it was clear that Britain faced no easy road to the podium.

This was something not lost on McCanney prior to the start. "I knew the pressure would be on in Germany to repeat our podium result. But if everything worked out okay I was confident of a third place result – or better. We've got a great team."

Right from the start the British lads attacked knowing that although the race would be a long one it was important not to get left behind on day one. With conditions suiting, they were soon in the mix – pushing hard for a place at the head of the results. Finding the fast, flowing German fields to their liking and gelling well with the forestry based enduro tests everybody was up to speed and it showed. At the end of day one Britain's juniors were well placed. Finishing the day relatively free of trouble they held a close second overall behind early leaders Italy.

"It was a strong start to the week," recalls Alex. "The trail was a bit harder than many expected so it looked like it would be a tough week. I struggled a little to find my pace. I was caught up in a lot of traffic and it was hard to overtake in places. Added to that I was riding a new bike so it took a while to get it set up."

While Britain enjoyed a great start to the week other nations were not so lucky – France being the most noticeable. Crashing heavily in the first test of the day Yamaha mounted Kevin Rohmer

was one of the first casualties of the event. Immediately, France was down to three riders and in the very next special test they almost lost another.

With his Husaberg spluttering to a halt during the second cross test on lap one Bellino was forced to push his way out of the special test. After a few minutes of frantically trying to fix the problem his bike fired back into life and he was able to continue. However, the setbacks cost France dearly. At the end of opening day they sat fourth overall and some four minutes behind the leaders.

Capitalising on France's error Britain put their best foot forward on day two and rode hard to gain some more ground. Remaining drama free they cruised into an early lead as Italy dropped out of the reckoning when they lost both Oldrati and Gianluca Martini. Australia also dropped to three riders. For the first time in recent memory Britain was leading the ISDE!

Unfazed by the situation and with a new track to follow on day three – the longest of the week at almost 350km – they kept pushing hard. However, by midweek France too had begun to settle into the event and having bridged the gap to Britain managed to sneak into the lead by the end of day three.

On day four France extended it again but this time only slightly. With the wet and snotty conditions right up the Brits' street they were

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Jeremy Joly's on the winning French team



Alex Rockwell pushes hard through a cross country test

right on pace and at the end of the toughest day were still in contention placing less than two minutes behind the French.

"With the conditions at their worst day four was a day to play it safe," reckons Rowland. "When I woke up and saw the rain I wasn't sure what to expect. After the hot weather all week, the course was baked hard and during the first lap it was almost impossible to get grip. Then the conditions changed again for lap two but this time it was soft and boggy – it was easy to get stuck. I was just glad to see the end of day four in one piece. France were still within reach but with just day five and the final motocross left we knew it would be hard to catch them."

With the harsh muddy conditions of day four behind them the new trails for day five were relatively simple by comparison and offered little opportunity to close the gap. Clear of third placed USA by some 12 minutes all they could do was keep applying pressure and

hope another mistake would come. Unfortunately it never did. Getting their three riders to the finish – and performing well during the final day motocross races – France successfully defended their Junior World Trophy ISDE crown.

Nevertheless, the performances by Britain's juniors were highly impressive. Ending the week with all four riders was something few other nations managed and improving on their 2011 result was more than they dared dream of.

"As a member of the Great Britain Junior team, finishing second overall is a dream result", admits Alex. "Leading early on was an amazing feeling and towards the end of the week we were still able to keep in touch with France – right until the final corner of the last motocross race. We didn't let up. France have two world champions in their team so to finish within three minutes of them – and over 10 minutes clear of everybody else – was a perfect ending to a brilliant week."

With bronze and silver medals to their credit is it too much to think about a gold medal performance next time out in Sardinia? "The ISDE has been a hard, tough event but to finish second overall in the Junior World Trophy team competition has been a fantastic result for everyone involved in the team," adds McCanney.

"I knew coming into the race that we could improve on the third place result that we got in Finland. But the ISDE is so unpredictable so we took things one day at a time. It was nice to capitalise on France's problems and lead the race after the first two days. We always knew they'd come back strong but we still kept the pressure on them when they were back in the lead. All of us have delivered strong results and everyone gave 100 per cent. Finishing third last year and now second proves that we're becoming one of enduros strongest Junior nations in the world, so who knows, maybe in 2013 winning could be a realistic goal."



Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.

DESCRIPTION		SIGNALLEMENT	
Beaver	Titulaire	★Wife	Femme
Occupation	PROFESSEUR		
Place of birth	BRILLINGHAM		
Date of birth	9/2/47		
Country of Residence	ENGLAND		
Height	5' 11" in		

COLD WAR!

A DECIDEDLY DAMP AND CHILLY VALKENSWAARD PROVED TO BE THE PERFECT BATTLEGROUND AS THE MXdN HIT HOLLAND SOME 21 YEARS AGO...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

The last time Europe took on the USA in a rough, tough, sandy team contest the outcome hung perilously in doubt until the last shattering lap of the day. The venue was Valkenswaard's Eurocircuit and the date September 1991. There were already old scores to settle. America's 1990 victory was a last-ditch robbery through the equally demanding Swedish forests of Vimmerby, partly achieved when Jeff Stanton downed an unhappy Dirk Geukens under cover of the trees and out of our sight!

Both men featured again at Valkenswaard, aboard CR500 Hondas, Stanton accompanied by Damon Bradshaw's 250 Yamaha and Mike Kiedrowski (125 Kawasaki) and Geukens by last year's losing team-mates, emerging sand maestro Marnicq Bervoerts (250 Kawasaki) and Suzuki's confident, newly-crowned teenaged 125 world champion Stefan Everts. "The US riders are not much faster this year," pronounced Stefan. "They will have to fight very hard for a Motocross des Nations win against Belgium. Last year we were strong but had bad luck."

Geukens, though, was an unlikely choice by team manager Johnny Stribos. A Dutch grand prix winner at Valkenswaard in 1990, he had shown only flashes of that brilliance in '91 and was beaten to the world championship by two fellow Belgians, Georges Jobe and Jacky Martens.

But what of the home nation? Holland had never won the des Nations and former Suzuki GP star and team manager Gerrit Wolsink had been fending off national outrage over his selection – out went perennial 500 favourite Kees van der Ven and ex-125 champ Davey Stribos and in came former 250GP star Gert-Jan van Doorn (on a 500 Honda), 21 year-old 250 grand prix rookie Edwin Evertsen (Kawasaki) and quiet 125 regular Pedro Tragter (Suzuki). Wolsink was one of an impressive raft of zealous young team bosses.

Swede Hakan Carlqvist and Germany's Rolf Dieffenbach thought a managers' race should be included on Sunday – to count towards the overall outcome! They could take on fellow ex-GP stars Jacky Vimond (France), Georg Reiter (Austria), Jan Kristoferssen (Norway), Corrado Maddii (Italy), Stephen Gall (Australia) and Roger de Coster (USA). Playful British pensioner Dennis Slaughter, clad in his traditional pinstriped demob suit, relished the prospect. "They woon't stand a chance," he cackled gleefully!

A rule change required five out of six scores to count, so there could be no passengers – every rider had to contribute. Practice, on a warm sunny Saturday, was mouth-watering. The US squad kept eager 18-year-old Everts waiting almost an hour before bursting out on track in formation. Stefan instantly engaged Kiedrowski in psychological warfare and for a few blistering minutes in the final session all six riders from Belgium and the States hammered round together!

But race day dawned beset by squally weather and the track cut up even deeper than spectating reserve van der Ven had ever seen it do before. A sudden downpour dispersed the pre-race team presentation and doused the vast, expectant crowd. 125s were first out against 500s – Swede Marcus Hansson (Honda) pulled an unexpected holeshot and held out for six searing laps from English starlet Paul Malin (Kawasaki) as Stanton powered through, picking off a man a lap.

Inevitably, at half-distance, Jeff, plastered in black Dutch dirt, scythed past the leaders in one decisive dive. Then 'Maler' fell, scrambling back aboard behind van Doorn but ahead of Dirk Geukens. Sixth overall though, >>

TONI CAROLI'S SPIRITUAL ANCESTOR SANDRO PIZAR WON THE THIRD MOTO





JEFF STANTON: COMETH
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Stefan Everts danced through to take 125 honours from Tragter, inspired German kid Pit Beirer (Suzuki) and Kiedrowski. That put the Dutch and American teams level on five points apiece, with Belgium one point adrift!

Misfortune manacled the Dutchmen early in moto two. Tragter, leading the 125 charge, clipped a trackside tyre and crashed while Evertsen's throttle stuck open and ploughed his Kwacker off the course. Both men made phenomenal recoveries to place third and fifth respectively in their classes but meantime outright war raged at the head of the race between the 250s of Bradshaw and Bervoerts. Marnicq finally forced a way past the demonic Damon with three laps to go while Everts led the 125s from Kiedrowski, who crucially repelled a tremendous last-lap challenge from 23 year old Tragter after the Dutchman had gobbled up to six rivals a lap!

With Bervoerts and Everts going 1-1 the Belgians leapfrogged into a narrow lead with eight points – America had nine, the Dutch 13! Marcus Hansson thrust to the front of the deciding race three, making it six successive des Nations' holeshots for fourth-placed Sweden. But Geukens crashed and brought

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VAN DOORN'S
FANTASTIC 500
RIDE AT TBF 1991
MX DES NATIONS
NEARLY BEAT
THE YANKS.



KIEDROWSKI
(125 KAWASAKI)
BRAVES BELGIAN FLAGS



down team-mate Bervoerts. The Belgians had blown it! Further round lap one Stanton also bailed out, big time, in front of astonished Dane Soren Mortensen. "I washed out", said Stanton dismissively later. Not according to Soren! "It happened on the exit to one of the fast left-hand sweepers," reported Mortensen. "He slammed the berm so hard that the back wheel exploded through it and he was thrown over the bars!" Soren was amazed that Jeff emerged unscathed, but escape he did, as Hansson completed a mad first lap ahead of van Doorn, with Bradshaw tenth in front of Evertsen. Stanton steamed through 20th, Bervoerts 25th and Geukens 26th – the Dutch were suddenly back in the driving seat and the crowd went barmy as van Doorn attacked Hansson, Evertsen passed Bradshaw and Stanton suffered two more minor spills.

But van Doorn also slipped two places and as dashing Italian stallion Alex Puzar (250 Suzuki) scythed past new race leader Pekka Vehkonen (250 Yamaha) after 20 minutes the skies darkened and rain began to fall. Valkenswaard became a dense battlefield demanding the most fearless and committed hearts. An explosive Evertsen ran third, leading 500 van Doorn fourth and Bradshaw

sixth behind Jamie Dobb's 250 Yamaha so Holland, now able to discount Evertsen's second race result, led handsomely.

But when it comes to heart and commitment, few have ever matched the Michigan Iron Man, Jeff Stanton. Apparently stranded in ninth place behind Mortensen and half a minute astern of van Doorn, Jeff had no idea of his team's score. "All I could see was Bevo (Forte) and the AMA guys yelling 'GO, GO, GO'. I thought, f*ck this..."

As rivals began to wilt, devoured by the heavy black sand, Stanton struck. With two laps to go he hustled past Scandinavians Mortensen and Hansson and on the fabulous, furious final lap, in the twilight of a biblical Dutch storm, flung his Honda past Bradshaw and the gallant van Doorn to snatch victory for the Yanks. This also cruelly demoted the unlucky home boys to third place as Bervoerts and Geukens reached the fringes of the top 10, stealing second place for Belgium on a tie-breaker!

Up front, Sandro Puzar and his Suzuki proved that Tony Cairoli isn't the first Italian to conquer sand but the sheer barnstorming bravado of Jeff Stanton had rescued America's 11th successive assault on the Peter Chamberlain Trophy. And the Netherlands still haven't won the MX des to this day.



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It's no good having a fancy tuned motor or 15-grand factory forks if your drive chain snaps and you have to push your blinged-up beast back to the pits while Joe Schmoe on his bone-stock bike – that's not only dog slow but also handles like the donkey out of Buckaroo – wins the moto, takes the title and gets the girl n'all.

Chains often get overlooked as they're relatively inexpensive but ultimately they're a very important part of your race bike and without them you ain't going anywhere. Week

in, week out they have a ridiculously hard life – especially when used in muddy, stoney or sandy going or if fitted to fire-breathing 450s – so they need to be shown a little love and serviced regularly.

To keep you on track and to make sure you get the very best performance and value from your chain we've compiled a few top tips n' tricks that cover cleaning, lubricating and correct adjustment. We've also shown you a failsafe way of knowing when your chain needs replacing...



07 At this point it's probably a good idea to remind you that the wheel needs to be running perfectly in line. To help you get this right all bikes come with indicator marks on the wheel blocks and swinging arm – check 'em and then check 'em again making sure dirt isn't spoiling your view. If it is, clean it off...



08 When fitting the split link always make sure the direction is correct. That means the blunt end of the clip must face in the same direction as the chain travels. Stick it on backwards and the clip will most likely fire off microseconds before your chain falls off or even worse wraps itself around the front sprocket and cracks your crankcases. This will ruin your day – and maybe your marriage.

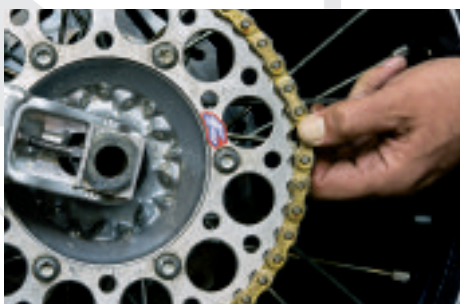
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DR DIRT AND HIS ASSISTANT CAPTAIN BURGERFEET TAKE YOU THROUGH EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW – AND PROBABLY SOME THINGS THAT YOU DIDN'T – ABOUT CHAINS AND THE RIGHT WAY TO LOOK AFTER THEM...

Words by **ROBIN BAYMAN** photos by **ANDREW WALCH**



01 Let's start with something simple – adjustment! Here we can fit four fingers between the chain and the runner which is considered one finger too many. As De La Soul will tell you – three is the magic number!



02 A quick tip to determine if the chain needs replacing – or just needs adjusting – is to see how far you can pull it away from the rear sprocket. If it pulls away as far as this then you need to buy a new chain and sprockets – they should always be replaced as a set.



03 A chain and sprockets that are in good condition should fit well together like this. A little movement can be expected and a tight chain is almost as bad as a slack chain but in this example a little adjustment will cure the excess slack.



04 A dirty chain robs horsepower so cleanliness is important. Every so often it's a good idea remove the chain so you can give it a good clean with a wire brush.



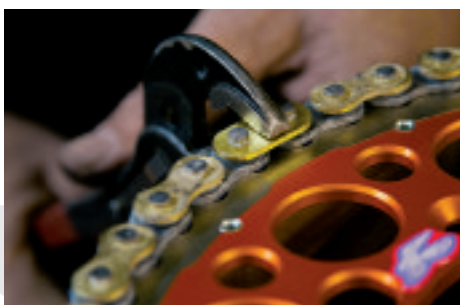
05 As a chain wears it'll get longer and so you may find that you'll run out of adjustment. In this case it's okay to remove a link especially if the chain was on the long side in the first place. Remember that length is determined by the inner links rather than the outer links – measure twice, cut once!



06 With the wheel nut slackened the chain adjusters can be unwound to push back the wheel until you can fit just three fingers between the chain and runner. Remember to tighten the adjuster locknuts as well as the wheel!



09 An o-ring chain has rubber seals between all of the links including the split link. When fitting the split link you need to remember to fit the rubber rings – that's two before the link is fitted and two on the outer face before the plate is put in place. It's really not rocket science.



10 Lots of people lose the will to live when fitting o-ring split links but if you squeeze the plate into position so the grooves for the clip are visible then it's really not that bad a task. Good quality water pump grips make the job even easier.



11 No chain maintenance is complete without lubrication. Good oil – or wax – will keep your chain running smooth and help you get the best life from your sprockets.

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

THE AMA ELITE LINE UP IN LAS VEGAS FOR A SHOT AT CLAIMING
A MILLION BUCKS OF MONSTER ENERGY'S MOOLAH...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Simon Cudby

There was a moment in 2011 when Ryan Villopoto lifted a box filled with one million dollars in cash high above his head and it seemed like the Monster Energy Cup – and a way to get rich quick on a dirt bike – had truly arrived. Although the AMA supercross and motocross champ took the gloss off motorcycle racing's biggest single payday slightly by saying he'd already earned enough money that season, the fact that he'd pocketed the green bills by winning all three motos at the Sam Boyd Stadium set a precedent for this exciting new event.

For the second edition the MEC saw

Monster Energy perhaps nervously filling up the piggy bank once more but also pulling out the stops to make sure this season closer/opener – the AMA crews all insist the Vegas exhibition event is a fine supercross testing opportunity as the calendar flips down to Anaheim 1 in January – was bigger and brighter.

There were obvious signs of tweaks. The race programme that had grossly overrun last October was tighter and better organised. The off-track entertainment boasted the likes of Ken Block and Nate Adams. The fireworks and lightshow was the icing on the cake in terms of creating the spectacle and a real theatrical edge

was provided by Ricky Carmichael who adjusted his track design to include a vast banked turn that entered the stands – dubbed Talla-Vega – and a slow and sandy Joker Lane that each rider had to take at least once in each moto.

Clearly the function of the Joker Lane was to stop the all-out dominance that Villopoto enjoyed in 2011 but the effectiveness of the addition didn't really become clear until the third and final outing when Eli Tomac pulled through the zone in the middle phase of the race but still managed to stay close to Ryan Dungey and Justin Barcia so that he was able to capitalise when his rivals chose their moments. >>



*Bam Bam takes the win
but misses the million!*





COATES CASHES IN!

BRIT BATTLER TAKES BRONZE IN AMATEUR SHOWDOWN...

Teenager Paul Coates left our chilly climes almost three years ago to seek a place in the AMA scene and turned a lot of heads with his run to second place in the second heat and third overall in the Amateur class at the Monster Energy Cup. Amidst all the clamour and glamour there was something surreal about a rider being interviewed in front of a packed stadium and trying to make himself understood through a thick north-eastern accent...

DBR: Paul, how come you've taken the plunge to tackle the US scene?

PC: "I've been over here for almost three years now because it is the place to be in many people's minds. There is a bigger industry for the sport here and not just more money but also more help involved. I don't think I would be on the best of teams in England but over here I've done enough to get a place with Vance & Hines Yamaha and it is working out pretty well. I will go wherever the best circumstances to race are."

"I've been doing amateur championships for the past two or three years as well as Loretta Lynn's and the Mini Olympics. Last year they made this Monster Cup and added a class for the amateurs. I signed for the team last winter and luckily they are west coast based so it is awesome to be here. It is like an exhibition race for us but to be able to walk the track and be among the pro riders and the big rigs is spectacular. I don't know many people from the northeast of England would be able to come out here and do what they love to do."

DBR: Did it take a while to acclimatise?

PC: "I still go home for Christmas and a couple of times a year. The American people are very different but down in the south on the east coast where we are based – at the Millsaps Training Facility – they are nice. It is in the middle of nowhere and it is an easy way of life. We just train and we don't do much else. I travel to the west coast maybe once a month and it is quite a

fast-paced life out there. I get to go around the world and travel between England, Georgia and the west coast and I get to see many different kinds of living. I like it on the east coast because it's quieter but America generally is not too bad."

DBR: Most people considering a move to the US for riding would probably opt for California...

PC: "I guess that is the draw for most riders but it is hectic and if you want to go anywhere you have to sit in traffic for at least an hour and a half! The tracks are dry out west and they don't get much moisture through the sunshine. It all depends on what you are willing to do and living at MTF is good for the gym, the trainers on-hand and the tracks right outside the door. I think the tracks and the training is better on the east coast and there are definitely less distractions."

DBR: Why do you think there are not more kids taking the punt to try and make it in America?

PC: "I'm not quite sure. A few guys have come over and tried it and it involves a lot of time and a lot of money. Luckily my sisters are much older than me so my mother stays with me 90 per cent of the time. It is a big commitment for the whole family but we are very much a motocross orientated family and I think you have to be like that to consider living on the other side of the world. It has all paid off with having a ride this year and it can only go upwards for me."

DBR: Have you set yourself a goal of cracking it in a few years or maybe taking what you've learnt and trying to do GPs back home?

PC: "The classes are a lot different over here. The amateurs are on super-minis instead of 85s, then you go onto Schoolboy – now with more 125s – B class, A class and then Pro. It is a clear path for what you have to do. This year I have been B class and right after this I will be A. Hopefully after Loretta's next year I will be

looking to go Pro. The plan is to stay over here and to make it over here."

DBR: How does it feel being a part of this event?

PC: "Getting to race at the same meeting as the pro guys and on this track with all the big jumps is fantastic. We are riding outdoors all year and being here can feel a bit like being thrown in at the deep end. Integrating more supercross into the amateur programme will only help us and I like how we are part of this event. The big track and the crazy features... well, we are in Vegas and it is a big gamble!"

"I think Carmichael has made a good job of the design and I'm just glad we don't have to go through that Joker Lane. There are that many guys on the track that it deteriorates quite fast and it was different each session. You cannot replicate 200 guys doing 30 laps of practice at the test track or practice track. That's the biggest difference because we do have big rhythm sections and jumps on the practice tracks but it can be difficult to deal with when it is so rough."

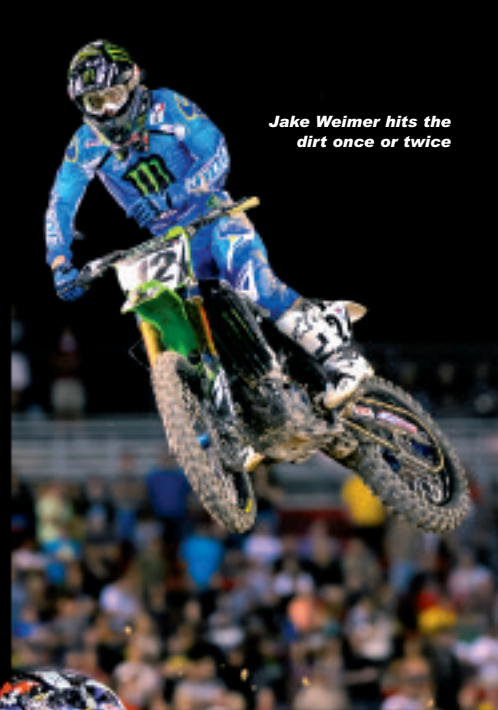
DBR: Would a slightly dumbed-down track like this be better for the AMA Supercross championship – might you see more Europeans willing to give it a go?

PC: "The Americans grow up riding big jumps and the top five per cent of the young guys have their own tracks or direct access to those tracks and it helps. There is that whole 'fish out of water' idea but I think the money is indoors – the sport is more marketable because everyone can see the whole thing."

"I hear from everyone in the industry that supercross is the future and it is what you have to good at to earn well and make a good career. It is something I'm looking to 'get down' and obviously being from England it is a bit harder for me but I am getting used to it. I like to consider myself a supercross rider and hopefully I can be there on the line at the start of 2014."



Dungey's 450 is fast out of the gate but proves to be fragile



Jake Weimer hits the dirt once or twice



Tomac takes a win but finishes short of his former team-mate overall



There were many reasons for wanting to do well flying around the heavily branded Monster Energy paddock on Saturday – talk of the MEC being a gauge of speed and fitness after the first phase of supercross testing, the money was a key part as the overall victor would earn at least 100k for essentially 40 minutes work and there was also the fun factor with riders talking about the split start (both gates negotiated two turns and then came together on a long straight) and the strategy of the Joker Lane.

The layout itself was maybe a little more technical compared to 2011 but it was also fast and the terrain quite slick. Even though there was not much to play for except bragging rights, a slight psychological edge and some extra credit for the casinos, the speed and intensity was outstanding.

Jake Weimer, Chad Reed and Justin Brayton were just a few that tasted the Sam Boyd dirt. Kevin Windham disappointed his fans and those of his opening ceremony transfers by suffering a concussion in practice and AMA 250 MX Champ Blake Baggett fractured his left wrist. The MEC is no cakewalk.

The open rulebook and the open attitude to the track were other standout features that separate the MEC from a standard supercross although the absence of European talent is still painfully obvious. Full credit then to Vance & Hines Yamaha's Paul Coates from Durham who grabbed a superb third place on the Amateur podium and second spot in his second heat.

Expanding TV coverage meant the MEC would be accessible to viewers in over 120 countries and for the most part the improved



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Dungey's bent shifter meant he had to change gear with his hand!



entry list was another crucial step for MEC's sustainability. We know now that Villopoto, Barcia and Tomac grabbed chequered flags and it was always against the odds that a rider would actually pocket the million with the likes of Reed and co also on the gate.

But nobody could have predicted that Villopoto would be so fast and ferocious – his corner speed had to be seen to be believed – and then crash out while leading the second moto (withdrawing from the event in some pain after clattering the wall). That Barcia would be so feisty in his first CRF450R ride, Tomac so measured as another big-bike rookie, that Weimer would be on the ground in each sprint and Dungey would have bent gear levers in two motos and need to shift by hand while launching over triples. MEC 2012 was exactly what it was

supposed to be – a major lottery and exhibition packed with surprises and unpredictability.

After the public had emptied the stands and in view of all the precise organisation, tight scheduling and glamour there remains a question mark over the Monster Energy Cup. Can an event that has set the bar for how a dirt-bike race can entertain so thoroughly continue to exist and especially with a bumper prize fund that cannot help but gather attention? The answer lies a little in the strength of Monster Energy's ties to the sport.

"For Monster motocross is a sport that was integral in the beginnings of our brand and it is something that is really ingrained in our culture," said Monster Energy Vice President of Sports Marketing Bruce Stjernstrom. "You can see it by how much motorcycle sport and motocross >>



Defending MEC champ Ryan Villopoto crashed out of contention in race two

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Justin Brayton's return to JGR Yamaha was less than spectacular



Austin Forkner beat Chase Sexton to the Super Mini title

It's standing room only in Sam Boyd Stadium



we are involved in around the world from the grand prix series, to Canada to Australia and the AMA series and European supercross events. Supercross is awesome I think. It is hard to argue against it in terms of the show and the attendance. The sport is the perfect match for what our brand stands for. It is a great fit."

With hard economical times can a million dollar race be something that exists beyond the short-term? "Honestly I don't think we believed last year that anyone would win the million," he continues. "It was incredible watching Ryan last year and looking back now I think it was really important that he did win. I think many people would associate that kind of money with some kind of catch but the fact that he took that money away caused a few riders to stop and think 'wait a minute, he actually won that?' and

it helps them in their approach to the race – they either want to try and win that million or stop someone else from getting it. In some sense it is a status symbol for the event."

Even though there was a deeper field for the second edition, Villopoto's achievement in taking the million in 2011 was put into sharp focus by how difficult it is to defeat the calibre of these riders on three occasions. If anything the MEC conjured a wonderful preview to the 2013 AMA campaign even though the likes of Stewart, Canard and Wilson were missing.

Cult author Hunter S Thompson once wrote 'for a loser, Vegas is the meanest town on earth'. If the Monster Energy Cup continues in this way – and to this standard – then Las Vegas is going to be a swell place for a great many people for years to come.



The highlight of Josh Grant's night is yanking the holey – fnar!



CRANK JOB!

ROB GETS TO GRIPS WITH HIS BIG-END AND FIGURES A BOTCHED REPAIR JOB IS THE CAUSE OF THE KAWASAKI'S CATASTROPHIC ENGINE PROBLEMS...

Words by **Rob Bayman** Photos by **Andrew Walch**

Some years ago I remember Crooks Suzuki building a complete bike from new parts as an experiment to see the price difference between a bike assembled from parts compared to a pre-assembled bike straight from the factory. I recall the complete bike being considerably less than the cost of all the parts needed to make up a bike.

After working with the KX-F I'm now beginning to appreciate what Crooks Suzuki were on to as the Kawasaki is costing us way more in parts to repair than a brand-new bike would have. But we can't really grumble as any

bike that comes half disassembled has not been stripped out of curiosity alone. Under normal circumstances the KX-F would be way beyond economic recovery but at least we'll end up with what will virtually be a brand-new 2008 KX-F.

From the off we were aware that the KX-F had issues which was the reason behind buying it but we expected to replace the piston and to press in a new big-end then write about the procedures. It's not pioneering stuff and in fact most working engineering repair shops will press cranks weekly. Oddly it has lead us to the likely cause behind the extensive damage of

the bike though and it isn't good.

Looking deeper into the crank we know that Kawasaki would never have allowed this bike to leave the factory with the crank we bought it with. We say that to defend Kawasaki because it is not their fault. For sure any bike, including a Kawasaki may have an occasional issue but we love our Kwacks for their dependability, design and build quality – we just wish we were working with a spare parts budget (did you hear that Mr Kawasaki in case you're feeling charitable?). In reality, Kawasaki have been good to me over the years and this bike is privately owned and funded by the RPM team



with support from a handful of product sponsors in case readers were thinking we just got free issue everything.

Now we have done the diagnosis we know the crank is beyond recovery – but only after buying a new rod and big-end. The bike came to us with a Hot Rod replacement rod kit fitted and we now believe the issue lies with whoever fitted the kit.

Before a bike leaves the factory it has to meet certain tolerances and the crank should likewise be re-trued when a new rod and big-end kit is fitted. Splitting the crank was easy with a hydraulic press and the old rod

binned straight away. Immediately we could see damage to the stuffers, even the stuffers anchors were butchered which suggest a shop or would be engineer had cocked it up but we decided we should be able to lightly dress any fragments or sharp edges on the stuffers to make the crank sound again.

Unlike a two-stroke crank, a four-stroke crank has oil passing through it to reach the big end bearing so carefully aligning the internal oil passage in one side web is essential before offering the top web to the proud crank pin. Subjecting a few tonnes to the upper positioned web makes easy

>>



WHO IS ROB BAYMAN?

Spannerman to Neil Prince, Jon Barfoot and Steve McMillan in Brit MX and GPs. International support to HRC developer Takayuki Miyouchi and US SX star Ricky Ryan. DBR tester and contributor since 1997.

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Believe it or not this is the right way to true a crank!

work of pressing the parts back to one complete crank assembly. With the crank now back together, it needs truing which is where experience shows – a good crank builder will do it in seconds.

We tried to true the crank but the result after our first attempt was that every quarter turn on the V blocks we were anything up to 17 thou out. Any amount of correction would only move the problem elsewhere and we feel this is likely the cause of the destruction within the motor.

The problem could make the motor vibrate so excessively it could put strain on the bearing and possibly even cause top-end damage. Our wild guess is that we do not have two halves of the same crank as this pair of halves just won't true up properly. It is likely that a former owner, probably a decent and trusting person had bought what was described as a reconditioned crank when it is likely made up with the better halves from two damages cranks and sold as an exchange item.

Regardless of anything, no quality engineer would allow that to leave his shop as suited for intended purpose. Anyway, it was back to the phone to call Corby Kawasaki so we could buy

a completely new crank. Corby Kawasaki are great in situations like this as they stock so many parts for so many different Kawasakis.

The completely different nature of a two-stroke crank is that all the lubrication is provided in the fuel as the two-stroke oil laden fuel makes its way round the engine lubricating everything it touches. We also replaced the big-end in the YZ85. The YZ had a reasonable crank, yet strangely a completely worn crank does not look much different unless it has overheated or seized and then a layer of death ash covers the parts and they become completely blue or grey.

The four-stroke on the other hand has oil pumped around the motor direct to many parts and jetted to reach others. Few may previously have been unaware that oil is passed through the crank shaft from the right hand side if the bike via the casing. For others this may be obvious but we still believe plenty of four-stroke owners are unaware of the oil system in their own bike which again promotes the value in frequent oil changes.

The open end visible in the crank shaft is an oil route rather than a machining point. The oil is

pumped into the shaft via the clutch casing at just under 3psi then once in the crank shaft, oil reaches the crank web where it transfers to the crank pin through the hole which we aligned when pressing the crank together. Obviously any misalignment is the short route to immediate seizure as the crank would be depending on splashes of oil alone which would not enough to lubricate the big-end.

Presuming everything is in alignment, the pressurised oil can flow into the crank pin. To help people understand the importance of the oil circuits it may be easy to compare the system to a car engine where a warning light or gauge is used to monitor the oil pressure. When the main bearings get worn on a vehicle a pressure switch identifies the oil is flowing too easily and sends an alarm usually as a red light. Our bikes do not have this pressure switch and consequently give no early warning but rather a 'it's a bit too late son' warning system which is a severe knocking sound followed by bellowing smoke.

With the big-ends replaced on both the YZ85 and the KX-F250 we should have probably changed the KTM at the same time but that is a risk we will take until we absolutely need to.

VINTAGE IRON!

With Farleigh fever fading fast and the National Twinshock series done and dusted for yet another year we take the chance to test out three of the best old bikes around...

Words by Edmund B Radley Photos By Sully

It's crazy when you think that these bikes are all over 30 years old – that's older than most current racers! The best thing about these twinshock bikes is that they've reenergized many riders who used to love motocross with a passion as kids. The amazing thing is that these bikes are even better looking after 30 years of hard abuse – unlike their riders!

The twinshock racing scene has been building rapidly over the last few years and its appeal is much different from modern-day racing – to say the least. To start with you can't just go to a dealer and slap down cash for a motorcycle. It's better to find a bike that you love, used – probably a lot – and then spend an ion restoring it. Then you get to parade your bike around in front of other people who cherish vintage equipment. Then you get to head out onto the track and probably break something – on the bike – as you sort of ride it towards reliability by shaking the kinks out.

If you want to ride these bikes like modern bikes you'll soon discover that they'll break. They aren't designed for big jumps and since most modern tracks – including DMP which we used for our test – have way bigger jumps and manmade berms than anyone would've ever seen in the early '80s you have to beef them up a bit. And be a bit less careless as you make your way around the track.

Once you've obsessively devoted countless hours to restoring, testing and rebuilding it's finally time to go racing. Twinshock racing is laid-back and it's just like scrambling in the old days which makes me feel old as I started racing in 1981! Turn up, do a bit of last-minute tinkering, chat with your mates, go out and do a race and then come back and have a right laugh after your arm-pump has subsided. Then make repairs to your bike, of course. The scene is definitely sociable which is why Team DickDoo – whose Maico we've tested alongside Phil Denton's stunning Hondas – live by the rule 'win or lose we'll have some booze'!

In my experience of racing these bikes I've found there's a fine line between riding as fast as I can and riding beyond the bike's limits – and you just have to accept that going hard could mean going home. Or that a part on the bike just might decide to stop working for no apparent reason. So, there is no point being too serious about racing – just have a laugh, a lot of fun and continue racing with a smile on your face!

The bikes we tested were race-proven by none other than Ryan Hughes, Chuck Sun and that even bigger legend and current National Twinshock Champ – Alex Rach. The machines are owned by Phil Denton of Phil Denton Engineering (www.phildentonengineering.com) and Chris Houseman of Team DickDoo. If you don't get the team name like I didn't then feel free to ask Chris about it – I did and it's well worth it. All three bikes are amazing to look at – especially the Hondas.

>>



Stevie Denton's CR250...



...and its big brother the CR480



Chris Houseman's DickDoo Maico



Ed pushes the 480 to its limit!



The 250's so light throwing it around is easy



The ethos of the Phil Denton Engineering team is to build a bike that HRC would have built if they had our modern-day engineering and 30 years extra racing experience!

Attention to detail on their machines is immense. All the nuts and bolts have been machined, the triple clamps made from scratch with a slightly altered handlebar position and fuel-tank brackets removed and replaced. This is just an example of the modifications that have been made which you wouldn't necessarily notice because the workmanship is so good that it just looks like it's supposed to be there.

There are also many things there which weren't obviously meant to be there: On the CR250, the first thing to sneak past the eye is the flat-slide Keihin carb. Sitting there in full view it looks like it's in its rightful place however back in the early '80s only the full round throttle slides were available. The carb is also

connected to a carbon-fibre airbox that these guys are currently testing for production.

The swingarm is very HRC-looking with modern-day chain adjusters complete with machined spacers, axle and nut to finish it off in mighty fine style. Even the brake stabilizer is gorgeous – made from round aluminium and machined to save weight – and the actual rear-brake arm has been handmade for this machine too.

The rear chain guard has been modified to fit a modern chain slipper which sits in a carbon-fibre guard that matches the front carbon-fibre guard.

The shocks on the Hondas are the original style with no clickers – just preload adjustment. At the front end of the machine the triple clamps are holding on to 1986 forks.

You might think that this is cheating but like Ricky Johnson had written in pen on the rear fender 'if you ain't cheatin' you're not winning!'

However, twinshock rules are that the frame, brakes and engine have to be of the correct era so no aluminium frames, no disc brakes and no water-cooled engines – oh, and of course it needs to have two rear shocks. Everything else is fair game!

And this is great because you get to have the comfort of wide footpegs – the Honda pegs are mounted on to the frame just like the latest aluminium frames which looks sweet too.

The engine is standard – with the original ignition – and the exhaust pipe is as trick as you like with the silencer handmade by Steve Denton who has lovingly created these two great machines.

The CR480 is pretty much the same machine as its smaller 250cc brother including the suspension, swinger, forks, foot pegs and even the frame is the same – it just has the bigger engine shoehorned in! Because the bigger engine is sitting in the 250 frame, the



The CR480's a rocket!

exhaust pipe needed to be cut and altered slightly and there is a fantastic cylinder head/frame bracket that would stand out even on a 2013 machine.

The Maico is a different bike altogether and back in the day these were the bikes to have. The Maicos are the most standard looking bikes in the pits and that's because they get the job done. However, that doesn't mean that the Team Dickdoo bikes don't get any special attention. There is plenty of aftermarket trickery on this thing.

Unfortunately, a stone broke the crankcase on Alex's race bike the Sunday before the test which was a real shame because this bike has some amazing modifications such as a 16-plate Zabel clutch which is accessible from a detachable clutch cover and operated by a Magura hydraulic lever! Anyone who has ever ridden a Maico will be impressed to know that you can use one finger to operate the clutch on that bike!

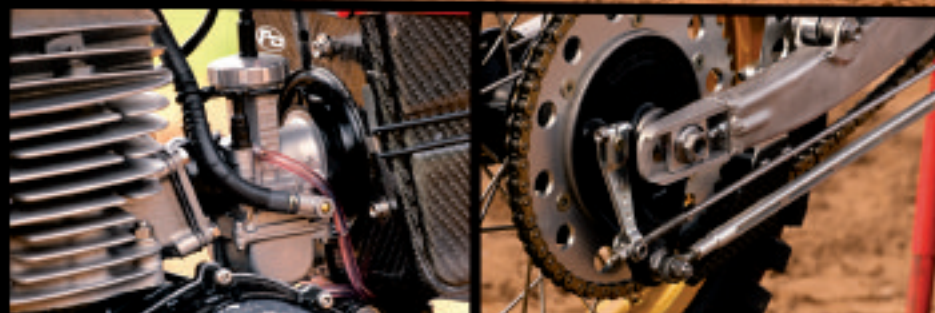
The Maico we're riding doesn't have that but it does have uprated fork springs, Reiger fully adjustable shocks, a digital ignition (the original ignition systems are analog and sh*t), and the motor is reed induction with a nikasil-lined cylinder. Apart from wider footpegs that's about it on these good looking German bikes. But looks don't win races – nope, not even for you Alex – so let's get them out on the track to shoot some roost and push some boundaries.

After jumping on the 250 Elsinore Honda the first thing I noticed was how slim the bike is and how uncomfortable the side panels sticking out around the shocks are! With the bike feeling slim and light (compared to the bigger bikes), the handlebar/seat/footpeg position is great and feels similar to modern bikes. It's easy to go from sitting to standing and to move around.

The back end of the 250 handles well – a bit lively but bearable – and the forks just felt brilliant. You can hit bumps hard and take front-wheel landings easily. The forks are



Modern style on an old bike from an even older rider



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The slightly agricultural looking Maico ploughs a mean furrow



ultra plush and make the ride pleasurable.

What really took me by surprise though was the motor which had a similar power delivery to my '97 Honda CR250! I thought it was going to be as flat as a fart, maybe more like a more modern 125cc engine but this engine revs up quick from the bottom and pulls strong (for an '80 250) and it isn't afraid to be revved. With the bike being as light as it is it's easy to jump too!

The motor on the 480 Elsinore Honda is also revvy. It feels like the motor has a light crank because the bike has that lovely, light 'ting' to it when you close the throttle and slow down for corners. The revs pick up uber-quick as it accelerates off the bottom – perhaps a little too quick though as it was a bit of a handful. Maybe a change in gearing and a bit of rear suspension setup would have controlled the 480 beast better.

The layout of the bike is the same as the 250 – it's easy to move around on and the motor feels slim considering it's a big engine. It took a while to get used to the balance of

the bike when jumping but once I'd gotten used to it, it felt safe in the air too.

In contrast, the Maico feels heavy when you get on it and is about as wide as Lisa Riley. Even so, she – that's the Maico – is a great ride! The shock mounts don't stick out on the Maico like on the Honda because that's just how wide the bike is. The bonus with this is that you get a huge, mega-comfy seat that acts like extra suspension! The position of the seat to foot pegs is fine about the handlebars could do with being a little higher and farther away – for me, at least.

As soon as you start this bike you can hear the horses waiting to tear off and in comparison to the Honda the Maico flywheel must be made out of lead because when you get riding this thing, she rolls and rolls on fast. There is so much torque in this motor that your arms feel like they are being pulled from their sockets. No need for any clutch action, just turn the throttle early in the corners, use a high gear and get ready to haul ass. The Maico is a great, easy

bike to ride because it handles well – it's stable, predictable and safe. A great racing machine.

Now, the one thing I haven't mentioned about riding these bikes – especially the Open class one – is the one thing that makes riding these bikes so much fun and that is that the brakes are crap! These bikes and in particular the Maico with its heavy flywheel are so fast that stopping them is an issue. And this isn't because these bikes are old because they've always been crap. So, the conflict is trying to race along the straights as fast as you can and using the brakes without slowing down too early!

But that's half the charm and at Farleigh Castle one year somebody asked me, "What do you have to do to go fast?". My reply was quite simple – 'if I scare myself four or five times in a lap then I'm doing all right'. If, like me, you get a real thrill from being scared and you want to inject some fun into your racing then invest in an old bike and give her some love. You'll have a blast!

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THIS IS JUST A TASTER OF WHAT'S ON AT THE 2012 INTERNATIONAL DIRT BIKE SHOW - CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE WWW.DIRTBIKESHOW.CO.UK FOR UPDATES.

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HALF CENTURY HERO!

Three-time 500cc world champ Dave Thorpe has just turned 50 and what better way to celebrate than a good old look at his life with our resident historian Jack Burnicle...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

Great Britain's most successful motocrosser Dave Thorpe turned 50 on September 29. Climaxing a racing career that started at six and spanned 25 years, Thorpe claimed five British Open titles, three 500cc world championships and 22 500cc grands prix during the massive, factory-fuelled 1980s when all four Japanese motorcycle manufacturers threw everything at achieving off-road supremacy. He celebrated his 50th at a hotel in Shrewsbury before enjoying a saturated Sunday out at Mick Extance's endurance school in the Welsh Mountains. "I just love riding motorbikes" grins Thorpe. "Any motorbike. Some do it because they're good at it but don't necessarily like it that much. Motocross and motorbikes are my life. I'm fortunate to enjoy it and make a living from it."

David is probably the most unflappable man I've ever met. Even on the eve of a French GP, when I was on the hotel landing blathering away gone midnight and a tousled head peered blearily round the nearest door. "I'm tryin' to get some sleep in 'ere Jack, if you don't mind." No fuss, no fury, just a restrained request...

He always was one of the politest, most contained heroes of a harsh, demanding sport. And he became a hero early. The first 500 GP of 1982, in France, aged 19, he and his Kawasaki took on and led world champ Andre Malherbe. We left the track in queuing traffic, 'Uncle Alec' Wright at the wheel. The French folk in a car alongside us recognised David, went berserk with excitement, waving and cheering – and crashed into the car in front. David exploded into the most prolonged fit of helpless mirth I've ever seen him exhibit, before or since – no sympathy there then! His lazy south London drawl and amiable manner disguised astuteness, aggression (when required!) and sly humour. I once had trouble getting in touch with him, pre-mobile phones. David, why the hell don't you have an answerphone? "Because then I'd have to ring people back, Jack", he replied without a hint of irony!

Yet this cool grounded bloke rewarded us with some of our greatest sporting memories. Those amazing rides at Farleigh Castle in 1982, 1985 and 1989 (when he finally won, having twice been denied on tie-breaks!), trouncing the Belgians in their own back yard at Marche en Famenne in 1984, his breathtaking beating of Americans David Bailey and Jeff Ward in the huge new MX des Nations at Gaildorf as rookie world champ in 1985, that ground-breaking lap of honour through the clamouring crowds at Hawkstone Park after his 1984 victory, his colossal battles with Malherbe, Georges Jobe, Eric Geboers and Leif Persson at Markelo's 1986 Dutch GP and with Malherbe again in a fantastic finale in Luxembourg. Then there was the dramatic

destruction of Geboers after two stupendous contests at Namur in 1989.

I've no idea how these events will be recorded in DT's mind but I do know he'll recall every blessed detail. He has a memory like an elephant. Woe betide a journo who got any detail wrong – he'd be on the phone, having a quiet word! He was born in Tooting, south London, where his mum Joan's parents lived and was initiated early into bikesport by his keen scrambling dad Keith. "Even on his three-wheeler cycle it was obvious David had balance and know-how," recalls Keith. "He'd constantly flick it up on to two wheels and he was always there waiting to be lifted on to the tank for the trip back to the pits. So I decided to build him a toy bike. Then I laid out a little track. It was never a case of teaching him. Just controlling him and explaining that he had to leave it alone sometimes. 'No, five year-olds don't go to school on motorbikes, David!'"

His son's first memory is of Keith building him that little twist 'n' go bike. "At Tweseldown in Hampshire there was a horse racing course round the outside and he'd let me do little loops out there. Then I started racing on a 50cc Suzuki built by a friend of Dad's. I was really competitive even at that age and I had a fair amount of success at the local clubs before we moved further afield to find different tracks and different rivals." Keith had a clear notion of his parenting responsibilities. "We had to be careful he kicked a ball about and did other things kids do. The key to steering anyone to success is if he is winning. It's the only encouragement you need. If they don't win and don't enjoy it you get out. But we always hoped he would make a professional career out of it!"

The family now lived out at Bracknell in Berkshire and Keith worked at Comerfords who imported KTM and Bultaco. Graham Beamish, then the Suzuki importer, was a friend and as Thorpe junior turned 12 he was invited by Graham to ride the first 125 Suzuki production bike to arrive in the UK. "We went down to Golding Barn (the circuit where Beamish lived in rural Sussex)", remembers David. "Graham's son Steven was there as well and was really quick! It was the first modern-day bike I'd ridden. A deal was struck and people began to know who I was..."

His racing heroes were numerous. "As a boy, I had lots of posters. Graham Noyce, Andre Malherbe, Roger DeCoster, Roger Harvey. There was no space at all on my bedroom walls!" Even then, he was quiet – and big! "I was this tall when I was 14," he laughs. "And I was always laid back. Mum said at Christmas I'd get presents and say 'thank you very much' – very polite, but dad was always disappointed at my lack of reaction! In sporting terms everyone knows I'm a very determined character but externally almost in going to sleep mode!"

He competed abroad, meeting fellow future world

>>

*Thorpe dominates the
1989 500cc grand prix
at Farleigh Castle*



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*A sporting Andre Malherbe
congratulates Dave after their
race one scrap in Luxembourg*

champ Jacky Vimond at a schoolboy international staged at Jacky's dad's track. As his son approached 15, Keith wrote to the ACU asking if David could graduate to the adult class early. "He felt it would be a wasted year staying in schoolboys," explains Thorpey. "But they said no so dad forged a relationship with Don Green at the AMCA. Don was very accommodating and Honda had their new 'Red Rocket' out. Their UK boss Gerald Davison was really interested in me going AMCA. So I rode Honda, got extra experience on a big bike and raced a few IMBA internationals in Belgium and Switzerland, competing against quality riders who helped educate me."

He first came up against the 'Cheshire Charger' Pete Mathia at Nantwich. "I had a good day, winning the junior races," he smiles. "Then I rode the allcomers final and had a wonderful battle with Math. Pete won, but I remember him coming over to me afterwards. He said 'Great race. Love your style and your lines but just one tip. You're really fast into a corner, square it off and go fast again. Do not do that if you have Bob Wright behind you because he probably won't even see you, but you'll feel him. He'll knock you all the way back home!' I still squared off corners, but was always aware of anyone behind me I'd need to treat with respect. Very useful advice! It's fair to say that a rider like Bob was committed to every corner whether you were there or not!"

David loves most sports. "There are not many I'll sit down and turn off," he admits. "Dad encouraged me to play any sport – football, racquet games, basketball, rugby, boxing, golf. I loved watching and participating. I absolutely love boxing. Those guys are so brave and talented." He was offered schoolboy forms by Queens Park Rangers football club but motocross was already his main ambition. "You can have a blinding game of football and still be on the losing side but when I sat on the line and the gate dropped it was all about what I did. That was really what made me want to do motocross." Then Alec Wright entered the Thorpe family world and David would emerge on to the world scene as a Kawasaki rider. "I'd met Alec years before when dad sent me to 'Train with Wade'



Thorpey chases Eric Geboers around Namur in 1989 – he wouldn't stay behind for long



and Team Green boot camps at Hawkstone Park. I remember he knocked on the door of our house in Bracknell (conveniently close to Kawasaki UK HQ), sat down, had a cup of tea, shared wonderful ideas for Team Green and we went with that. It meant I got on a big bike – the 420 Kawasaki – early.” He smiles. “I really enjoyed riding a big bike!”

Back in the ACU his character-building started in earnest. “I was finding my way through the support championship against the likes of Neil Griffiths and Paul Hunt,” he smiles. “With dad working at Comerfords, who supported Vic Allan, I already had Vic as a training partner. Some 15 to 20 years older than me, he’d never had anything easy. That mindset rubs off. Then when I qualified for the Top 40 I came up against old school pros like Roger Harvey, Rob Hooper, Bob Wright (watch your back!), Vic, Andy Robertson. There was no short cut with them. They’d worked for everything they had. They were never lazy in anything they did. Never had it easy. Roger once warned me that sometimes out on the road you’d be glad of a can of cold beans. Being surrounded by these guys as I grew up gave me massive values. I never took anything for granted.”

Even a badly broken leg sustained up at Bassenthwaite in Cumbria couldn’t derail Dave Thorpe’s drive towards the grands prix. Alec Wright stood squarely beside his stricken star for 12 agonising months before David, still only 18, made his mark in late 1981. Fourth in the first moto of the title-decider in

Luxembourg behind Hakan Carlqvist, Andre Malherbe and Graham Noyce he ended the day sixth overall and 15th in the table.

Then in the opening round of 1982 he led reigning world champion Malherbe (Honda) for most of the second race of that French GP at Villars sous Escot and a new international star was born. A race winner in Austria and at Farleigh Castle (and both times denied the overall verdict in tie-breakers with ultimate world champ Brad Lackey!), David would join Andre at HRC the following season. 1982 also saw him win the 250 national crown and contest several 125 rounds against the eventual champion, his old mentor Pete Mathia!

A harsh learning year abroad followed, though he nailed his first British Open championship. Then at the last three GPs of 1984, while Malherbe and Jobe contested the world title, Thorpey went on an almost unprecedented run of success. His larger-than-life team boss at HRC, Californian Steve Whitelock, remembers watching David line up for the Belgian Grand Prix. “The way he muscled his way in, elbows out, staring down each of his rivals,” says Whitelock. “I could see the change in his demeanour. He was ready to win.”

“It was weird,” agrees Thorpe. “I’d had a pretty good season, winning in Sweden. Then I went away with Sharon and our little boy Lewis to Brighton the week before Hawkstone, had family time and got my head into gear. As with any British rider, the British GP is really special. I just turned up at the race, worked hard,

got good suspension settings and felt really happy. I was up against Andre Vromans, one of the best sand riders in the world, and it all worked out (this was the day of David’s memorable lap of honour in front of 25,000 fans, many of whom invaded the pitch!). I thought know what, if I can do that around Hawkstone, I can do that anywhere.”

Next stop was Belgium, but not, for once, Namur – instead it was Georges Jobe’s home track at Marche en Famenne. “I could not believe it when I turned up there,” grins David. “Cambers, grass, downhills, everything I excelled in. I thought, ‘this track is made for me.’ Then the last round in Italy was fast, with big downhills.” Six motos, six wins, equalling a record set by the Flying Finn, four-time world champion Heikki Mikkola.

Then in 1985 Thorpey set his own UK record, winning every race in the British Open series. And he and Malherbe would take the world championship to the final race in two gripping seasons of high drama. “I’m a great believer in the psychological side of sport,” explains Thorpe. “I really, really wanted it. When things got tough, I had the ability to knuckle down and crack on. When it was getting close with Andre I’d think, as I was going off to sleep, ‘in 20 years time do you want to have any regrets?’. Then next day in training I’d push and push and push. I was lucky never to go to a championship decider and not emerge a winner. What really sticks in my mind is the ability to put pain behind me and still deliver the goods. I’m hurt, but >>

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I've got to get over it and win'. Totally a mind thing. Even that veterans' GP at Mallory Park a few years back. One voice saying 'hey, you're 40, get over it'. But the other saying 'do you really want to be known as a loser?' The angel and the devil, side by side!"

Thorpe holds in special regard his rivals of the 1980s. "I rode against the best of the best – in the UK Noyce and Nellie Hudson. I have to thank Graham because his racing the British championships meant the Japanese were constantly there and we started to get noticed. Then Malherbe, Jobe, Carlqvist, Eric Geboers and just behind them so many quality riders like Jacky Vimond, Heinz Kinigadner, a young Joel Smets – even Stefan Everts was there as a child. He always walked round the circuit and I used to see him and wave during practice!" He admired them all for different reasons. "Andre for his technique and balance, Eric for his never give up attitude, Carla for his inner strength – 'you're just gonna have it!'. Testing once he dug a hole with a shovel round the back of the van and told his Japanese Yamaha bosses 'I'm burying your bike because it's sh*t!' It was all or nothing – if you weren't there for him, you weren't in the boat."

His admiration extends to the present-day champions. "One thing I like about Jeffrey Herlings is that he's got a bit of character. He tells us what he thinks. And my god, can he ride a motorcycle. I feel a bit sorry for Tommy Searle. He could end up like the kid who, born in a different era, would have won titles. Roczen, Herlings, Tonus, Cairoli – who's unbelievable – Nagl. There are so many quality boys around. Tommy's still got a chance. He rode exceptionally well in 2012 but was beaten by someone who only comes along every

so often. And now he's got Cairoli. I can't see many chinks in his armour. He's hugely competitive, incredibly accurate, never makes mistakes, has the mindset for reading a track at speed and from a technical perspective he's very good. I prided myself on my own accuracy – within six inches, always on the same bit of track. Most champions have had that finesse – very few have been really throttle happy."

Working closely with Honda UK's marketing department and running his own Buildbase Honda MX team David obviously keeps close tabs on contemporary racing. He always has. Team manager of the winning MX des Nations squad that broke America's stranglehold at Roggenburg in 1994 (his first year in racing retirement) he went on to handle the likes of Mike Brown and Carl Nunn in his Cat Honda grand prix teams and, more recently, the CCM factory outfit for which Tom Church secured a British supercross title.

"The promotional circus we have now is much bigger than in the '80s," he says. "But I believe the quality of riders is still there. The tracks are probably technically more demanding in an artificial way. I'm not of the old school that looks back and says my time was better. I say there were some fantastic races that people thoroughly enjoyed, and I still see that today. Unfortunately you watch jumps on TV and say, yeah, it's a jump, a jump and another jump, but the tracks get very rough and the guys have to be very gifted to deal with them. The days of me thrashing round the old Dean at Camberley to prepare for a grand prix season are long gone. If you could do 50 minutes round Camberley Heath you could do 50 minutes round anywhere!"

Those epic seasons against Carlqvist and the Belgians produced epic races and riveting conclusions. At Wohlen in Switzerland for the final GP of 1985, Thorpe won the first moto then tiptoed to sixth in a glutinous mire in race two – enough to secure the crown ahead of brave race winner Malherbe.

Then David, Andre, Geboers and Jobe all went into the final round of 1986 at Luxembourg with a shout at the title. Thorpe struggled round the fast, lethal adverse cambers before a watching Jem Whatley pulled him over and got him on the right line. In the dry first race he pressured Malherbe until Andre made a mistake and David pounced. They shook hands the moment they crossed the line. "Congratulations champ", said the sporting Belgian, but the heavens opened before the second moto – anything could happen!

In truly treacherous conditions Kurt Nicoll and Leif Persson crashed spectacularly in the fast first turn and Jobe skated round those glistening, evil cambers to claim a victory that Malherbe desperately needed. But Thorpe, second, kept Andre at bay to snatch another world title by just five points from Malherbe in a day of unforgettable tension!

The Honda Racing Corporation's winter testing programmes were a constant feature of the 1980s. "Some years we tested in America, some in Japan and once in Ibiza," recalls Thorpe. "So I spent a lot of time with their American riders for those fortnights. We all had individual bikes and there were periods when the US machines had to be more stock than ours. In terms of technique they were amazing. And fortunately I got on well with them all. David Bailey, Johnny O'Mara, Rick Johnson – they were really nice, genuine





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**A star is born as Thorpe leads
Malherbe in France during the
1982 season opener**

guys." And also intense rivals when that end-of-term MX des contest arose – David brilliantly beat Bailey and Jeff Ward at Gaildorf in 1985 but was brutally on the receiving end at Maggiora a year later.

His own favourite races? David takes a moment to reflect. There have been many! "Farleigh Castle, coming back through the field in 1985," he murmurs thoughtfully. "Then 1989 against Eric at Namur. The second moto there was a bit special for me. Even from the first day I saw Namur, when I thought 'I'll never be able to race this track', going there gave me goose bumps. There was something special about the place that got the heart going!"

Farleigh 1985, of course, was when Thorpe crashed in the first turn with Max Anstie's dad Mervyn, remounted and fought through from last to catch Malherbe and grab the lead after just four quite incredible laps! And that amazing 1989 victory at Namur, right knee stitched and heavily strapped, broke even Eric Geboers' indomitable spirit but came after two seasons in which injury had sidelined the Englishman.

1987 saw Georges Jobe grab the spoils on his private Honda. And in 1988, after a race win in the USA followed by his superb double at Hawkstone Park thrust him nine points clear of Geboers, Thorpe hurt his shoulder at Lichtenvoorde in the Netherlands, leaving the little Belgian clear to claim the crown.

David still sees Eric regularly. "His camper was just along from us at the British GP," smiles Thorpe. "On Saturday night he and his new wife came and sat with us and we had a few beers. Typically, he turned everything into innuendo. Even sitting in the camper... 'always behind me, as usual, aren't you Dave...' Very,

very funny! I bump into Georges and Andre occasionally but haven't seen Carla for years. I'd love to meet him again."

He always felt that those factory CR500s could still be competitive today. "I love riding the four-strokes," he says. "But when I joined a parade at Farleigh Vets' MXDN last year on my 1989 bike and was waved on to a surprise second lap I stopped Tom Church at the top of the steps in the woods and persuaded him to swap. 'You're a modern day rider, have a go on this and see what you think'. So Tom finished that last three-quarters of a lap. He was so excited. 'Dave, I could win on this now!'. That proved my point. It could still be very competitive in the right hands!"

Thorpe's Buildbase Honda team ran small, stocky Frenchman Nicolas Aubin in the UK during 2012. David, despite Nico's protestations, refers to him as 'the new Eric Geboers'! Aubin won the Red Bull Pro Nationals and will be joined in 2013 by Belgian former world champion Steve Ramon. This increasing trend seems to me to deny young UK prospects the opportunity to progress in a well-funded squad. "I have got to be honest," agrees Thorpe. "Foreign riders do potentially take the place of youngsters in the UK. But in truth, if someone is out there, like Tommy [Searle] or Jake [Nicholls], they are in a top team but they don't race in England. What suits their team is a British rider racing the world championships. What suits us is a foreign rider in the British championships. So I see no problem. We have a Phoenix Tools Honda team to nurture younger riders. I work with the Red Bull Pro MX youth academy and I see young kids on a regular basis. I'm comfortable that if they work hard and get the right roll

of the dice they'll get the right breaks. As you did when I was a boy, you need to be in the right place at the right time. I feel the next Tommy Searle is not too far away."

Thorpe also foresees the potential for a dramatic development in the organisation and promotion of the British motocross championship. "In the not too distant future we could almost have a breakaway series like the British Superbike championship," he reckons. "A stand alone series without grand prix riders, because with the amount of GPs we now have on the calendar it's difficult for the Maxxis, the British Masters and Red Bull to find free dates. As it is, the Maxxis will be one of the strongest championships outside of GPs in 2013." A fascinating notion from a thoughtful man – I know from my own involvement in both World and British Superbikes that BSB is regarded as the strongest domestic road racing championship in the world and attracts an increasingly international entry...

Whatever happens, David Thorpe will continue to relish his role in the world of motocross. He and his second wife Gail, together with their young daughter, live in deepest Devon from where they run their own company, race teams and training schools and carry out consultancy work for Honda UK. Thorpe is properly back in cohorts with the company with whom he achieved his greatest accomplishments. "Best of all, Jack," he concludes. "How many nice people have we been privileged to meet in our lifetime in this sport? Motocross brings people together in the right way." His only misgiving was a fortnight's holiday planned by a very insistent Gail. "I've never been away for two weeks in my life," protests David. I do believe the big man has met his match!

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Although quite a big old boy Wakker was well impressed by the RM-Z's great power and handling prowess

SORTED!

IS SUZUKI'S NEW RM-Z250 READY TO WIN? OUR MAN RECKONS IT IS...

Test by Geoff Walker Photos by Redeye

It's been a fairly unspectacular year for Suzuki's RM-Z250 on the world scene with zero wins in the world championship and an equally unsuccessful season Stateside n'all which is all fairly strange considering that in stock trim the 2012 baby Z is a very solid performer. While Max Anstie hopes to turn the yellow brand's luck around in the WC next year – that's the world championship and not some randomly convenient convenience – Suzuki themselves have gone a long, long way towards ensuring some success by refining their 250F and making it even better for the average Joe.

With Ed Bradley off on holiday somewhere we sent our unaverage Joe – aka Godfrey J Walker esquire – over to a super deep Apex to spin some laps on Suzuki's latest MX2 missile so he could let us know if it's hot or not. Over to you Geoffers...

"I was pretty excited to hit Apex for a one day shakedown test of the latest RM-Z250 from Suzuki. Although the colour scheme is a bit funky and not to everyone – or anyone's – taste that's quite easily fixed with a sticker kit, seat cover and new plastics. Everyone likes to customise, right?

"The important changes include an all-new transmission. Suzuki basically created a new five-speed box for the '13 model and they claim it's a big improvement. The engine gets plenty of modification too including a new ignition system, piston and intake as well as exhaust valves. The changes are basically designed to enhance mid-range power.

"The suspension and chassis comes in for an overhaul too with the Showa Separate Function fork up front. The SFF forks have one leg that contains a spring while the other holds the damping controls. This second generation of the SFF goes from a 47mm to a 48mm to minimize twist-flex from the legs performing different functions. The rear shock gets a lighter spring rate to compensate the frame being more rigid. This is achieved by some internal wizardry happening inside the frame and also stronger engine mounts that are made from steel instead of aluminium. The subframe is stiffer as well apparently – but how does it all work as an overall package?

"The short answer is good! The bike feels comfortable from the off and I was able to get straight down to business. The balance this bike has is evident straight away and makes for fantastic turning prowess. The frame updates seem to work perfectly well with the new forks and aggressive internal settings in both forks and shock – the bike takes the hits easily even with someone my size in control.

"I was very impressed with the shifting from the gearbox as this has been a weaker point on previous Suzukis. Every shift was positive through the five speed box and the vast improvements in this department are without doubt top of my list as 250 gearboxes take a tremendous amount of out on the track so strength in this department is essential.

"The new boost in mid-range power helps things dramatically and the motor pulls hard – even in the deeper parts of the Apex circuit. The power is so healthy it allows you to short shift if that's your thing which helps maintain the overall stability of the bike on the choppier sections of track.

"I find when a motor and chassis works in harmony like this you'll leave any track feeling like a happy human. So that's why in my mind the 2013 RM-Z250 gets the Geoff Walker initial-test seal of approval."



SPECIFICATIONS

RM-Z250

Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission: Five-speed constant mesh
Fuel tank capacity: 6.5 litres
Front suspension: 48mm USD fork (310mm travel)
Rear suspension: Monoshock (310mm travel)
Front brake: 250mm disc
Rear brake: 240 disc
Seat height: 955mm
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Kerb weight: 107kg
Price: £6399

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HONDA HONCHOS!

FACTORY TEAM BIGWIGS PAOLO MARTIN AND LORENZO RESTA GO TOE-TO-TOE IN OUR OUT-AND-OUT MASCULINITY SHOW...

Interviews and photo by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

LR: "For me it's easy – George Clooney."

PM: "Maybe Robert De Niro."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

LR: "I cleaned the filter on my scooter only a month ago!"

PM: "Oh only two weeks ago, as I work a lot on the bikes you know?"

DBR: What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

LR: "Two minutes ago to you!"

PM: [Laughing] "Yes the same as Lorenzo... it's only a small white lie though, right!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

LR: "I think I would be able to do it but the last time I did was on the schooling for the CBR1000 about five years ago"

PM: [Laughing] "What do you think?"

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

LR: "That's easy! Carbohydrates – you know too much pasta, rice etc."

PM: "Pretty much everything – look at the size of me! Too much alcohol as well. In Italy we drink the Spritz which is Prosecco and Aperol – it's good for the fun times but it's dangerous for you physically!"

DBR: Your rider is in second and on the leader's rear wheel – would you expect him to take him out on the last corner for the win?

LR: "Sure!"

PM: "It depends... if you don't have the speed to make the pass without taking him down then settle for second."

DBR: What has been the managerial highlight of your career so far?

LR: "It was Bobby's Teutschenthal double last year."

PM: "For sure it was 1991 when I won the world championship with Trampas Parker. I have had lots of good times but that first title is definitely the best."

DBR: What car do you drive?

LR: "I have a Volvo V50."

PM: "A Honda Jazz Hybrid."

DBR: What car would you drive if money were no object?

LR: "Honestly it is difficult because when I was younger I was looking at cars like the Ferrari but now a car like a Vivaro to fit the family in would be a dream! No seriously it would still be the Ferrari GTO from '84."

PM: "Maybe a Citroen or Ford Works Rally Car. I tried it once and would like to try it again."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

LR: "I would be just a bit taller and maybe a little cooler mentally."

PM: "Maybe I could do with losing a few kilos!"

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

LR: "That's a difficult one – I think it would be John Lennon."

PM: "Honestly, I don't know who it would be."

DBR: If you could have any superpower for a week what would it be?

LR: "I think probably for me it would be flying."

PM: "My life is about racing and the results of that racing so I would like the power that meant that all of our work came together and we win the races. Not by just a little bit but by a lot – you know Cairoli style!"

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an Island what three things would you want with you?

LR: "I will consider my family as one thing so my family, a very good bottle of wine and a corkscrew."

PM: "My family, a cigar and a lighter."

DBR: The most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

LR: "It's very difficult for me to be drunk as I have quite a high tolerance to alcohol so it doesn't happen often... saying that the last time it happened I was swimming in the river at 2am... completely naked!"

PM: [Roaring with laughter] "Me too, I was with him."

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?

LR: "My house probably."

PM: "My garden, I spend a lot of time in my garden."

DBR: Favourite race you've ever watched one of your riders in?

LR: "The race I most enjoyed watching was Ernee in 2005 when Mickael Pichon was riding for France in the Des Nations – it was probably the most emotional race of my life."

PM: "It was the race Lorenzo mentioned – Teutschenthal with Bobby last year. Pichon also made some good races but Pichon is Pichon, Bobby has improved in his time with the team and he started from not so good but has got better and better with the help from the team and when he won it was a victory for the whole team."

DBR: Be honest now, how often do you Google yourself?

LR: "At least once a month!"

PM: "Never, although I do have a look on Facebook when looking for friends."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

LR: "Red!"

PM: "All."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

LR: "No never! I enjoy sex from the first to the last second – watching my rider win a race I enjoy only after the finish line!"

PM: "No they're two different things – two different feelings and I don't think you can compare the two. A woman is a woman and a bike is a bike!"

DBR: What do you think others would say is your most annoying habit?

LR: "I talk too much!"

PM: "Sometimes I can speak a little too directly."

DBR: If you could change one motocross related decision you've made what would it be?

LR: "For sure I won't say names but in the past we have signed riders who turned out to be not as good as we were expecting. We also let someone go who I wish we had kept on to see what he would have done the next year."

PM: "For me I put it all down to experience and I won't make the same mistake twice. For me most of my decisions are based around budget, what riders, what parts etc etc. It's a balance you have to make, I think that if we'd had the budget in the past we could have had six world championships, sometimes the decisions I make aren't necessarily what I like as they were what was best for the team at that time so I can't look back and regret them."

DBR: If you had to permanently give up the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be?

LR: "Television."

PM: "Telephone."

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THE BOOK OF

ELI

ELI TOMAC HAS BEEN AT THE SHARP END OF THE PACK ALL SUMMER LONG AND HE'S LOOKING FOR EVEN MORE SUCCESS NEXT YEAR N'ALL...

Words and photos by **Steve Cox**

Geico Honda's Eli Tomac comes from quite an accomplished family. His dad – John Tomac – is the most successful mountain bike racer of all time and his mom Kathy was also a top competitor in the mountain bike racing scene. Although Eli rides bicycles for training he has always been all about motocross.

He hit the scene like a rocket in 2010 winning the Hangtown National in his first ever pro race but then the next round at Texas

was so hot that it basically ruined his whole summer. This year marked his second full season – racing supercross and motocross – and it was a marked improvement as he scored the Lites West supercross championship before making a late season run at the 2012 AMA 250cc National motocross championship as well.

We caught up with Eli after he had just finished some supercross riding in preparation for the Monster Energy Cup – and the 2013 AMA supercross season – which will be here before you know it... >>



*Eli Tomac's intensity
is unrivalled on the
AMA racing scene*





DBR: You haven't made much of a secret about the fact that you really prefer supercross over motocross...

ET: "I really like supercross. I definitely look forward to it every year. I'm always ready to go ride the supercross track right after the outdoors. This year, I did do a lot better in the outdoors so that was kind of nice. It should be another good year for sure."

DBR: What is it specifically about supercross that you like so much better?

ET: "I don't know. I guess it's just all the jumps and the rhythms and there's just stuff going on constantly. There's no break. It's just fun to me."

DBR: So it's the intensity of it?

ET: "Yeah. It's super intense. There's a lot of battling. It's almost like supercross is the fun and outdoors is the work. Outdoors is just brutal. It's 100 degrees out and you're racing for 35 minutes. Supercross, you're in a stadium and you barely get dirty. So, they're two different things. They're almost like completely different sports!"

DBR: You nearly lost the Lites West title this year. You had a huge lead then crashed out of San Diego and gave up the whole points lead...

ET: "Yeah, I had a huge points lead going into San Diego and then I wadded up at San Diego. I couldn't really believe it. Luckily enough we had that break which gave me time to heal up. We were basically starting all over again so it kind of felt like two seasons to me. But I had such a big points lead before I was like there's no way I'm going to lose this thing. So I was just going to give it everything..."

DBR: Yeah, just give it everything you had. Obviously you did that to pull down the title. What did your dad think of you getting your first title?

ET: "Well, I won the thing and everyone was obviously super stoked. We're actually pretty quiet around each other about the actual racing and stuff like that. It was just like I had to go out there and do it myself."

DBR: I know you have Mike LaRocco as a team manager. Do you tend to lean more on him for advice about this stuff than your dad?

ET: "I'd say it's a little bit 50/50. From the whole mental side my dad doesn't really do much. I think I'm not one of those mental guys. I'm just good at kind of putting myself in my own zone."

DBR: Coming into the 2012 Nationals you hadn't won an event since your very first pro race at Hangtown in 2010. How hard is it to have confidence heading into the season after going that long without winning?

ET: "Really it was just pissing me off because I was like how did I win that race when I was 17 years old – basically still a kid – and not since? I guess that just gave me the extra drive. I think it just helped having a couple seasons under my belt just for the experience and learning how things really work – and also just how to make it through a whole moto without blowing myself up."





Eli much prefers supercross to the great outdoors

DBR: Was that part of the problem? You would try too hard early or whatever and get your heart rate up and then blow yourself up? Is that what was going on?

ET: "Yeah. I think it's just easy to do that. You can go too hard too early and either get tired or you just melt from the heat. So you've got to learn how to manage races, for sure."

DBR: You were obviously very happy to finally get a win early in the 2012 season. Talk about what that meant for you.

ET: "I got that first moto win in Texas and I won the overall there. That was a good round to win because it was early on. It was hot but I got through the heat. Obviously Hangtown sucked but once I went to the Texas round and won that it just totally flipped the switch."

DBR: You'd had a few tough races which isn't uncommon but near the end there you all of a sudden started reeling off moto wins and the next thing you know you've got a shot at the title coming into the last race of the year. What did you think going into the final round?

ET: "I wasn't super confident I could get it done – 14 points is a pretty good gap. The way things went that week before I knew I had a shot at this thing and then you always go back and look at your season and I was thinking I wish I could have done a little bit better here or there. The first moto at Unadilla I got a sixth and then I

kind of hit the tree at Southwick [he was gaining on Baggett in the second moto and hit a tree and fell]... I should have just done a little bit better at those first couple rounds..."

DBR: You really did have a lot of momentum late in the season. Were you feeling it?

ET: "Yeah. It seems like momentum and confidence is huge. I think I actually contribute winning in the outdoors to my supercross season because I won like five rounds of that. You're racing the same guys so when you go up to the line you know you can beat those guys."

DBR: You're quite a bit bigger than your competitors. There have to be advantages and disadvantages to that. How do you think it affects you?

ET: "I'm definitely a little bit bigger. It hurts me on the starts a little bit. I got a little bit better at the end of the year. Seems like at the beginning I was struggling with my starts because I was starting in 10th instead of fifth and I was just throwing energy away early trying to get by guys. So I guess that's where it hurts me and then where it does me good is when the track is super gnarly and rocky and all that I can try to just manhandle through that stuff – kind of like at Southwick. I think where I'm at right now would be a perfect match for a 450. I can't wait to go to that."

DBR: But you've got another year left on the 250F right?

ET: "Yeah. I think in supercross my size doesn't really hurt me. I think just with the harder ground it doesn't hurt me as much on the starts. So I don't really mind it there."

DBR: How much do you actually weigh?

ET: "I'm like 160 pounds or 162 after a big burrito [laughs]."

DBR: I asked Blake Baggett after Elsinore and he said he's 129 pounds...

ET: "Yeah, that's just stupid. That won't work on a 450..."

DBR: No matter what kind of bike you're on 30 pounds is a lot...

ET: "I think that actually hurts him in supercross – being so little. I don't know."

DBR: When the starts are disked so deep does that hurt you more? Or is it good because you can get your weight on the back wheel?

ET: "Actually I think with deeper dirt it hurts you more. I think that's why in supercross I don't have as many issues. I'm actually getting more traction in supercross where it's slicker but outdoors you want to kind of just float across that deep stuff if you can. You want to stay on top."

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DBR: The other thing about Elsinore is that after that early crash you did put in a ton of effort to come through from way, way back and to score points when it really ended up not making that much of a difference in the actual title chase or anything like that. Were you doing that just for pride or did you think that maybe it was going to make a difference?

ET: "I was still charging but the problem with that second moto was when I crashed and I was like half knocked silly. It literally took me the whole time for the pack to go by to feel like I was normal and then to pick up my bike. I was dizzy and saw a few stars..."

DBR: You went down pretty hard.

ET: "I was jacked for half that moto before I could really start going. I made it to 16th but if it had just been like a little tip-over I could have made it a lot farther up. But Justin won the moto so he did the best he could have done. I would have had to have gotten fourth or something."

DBR: In the first moto you nearly caught Blake Baggett but then he got by Barcia and you got stuck behind him...

ET: "Yeah. I caught Baggett and then I just kind of... I don't know if I went a little too hard to try to catch him. I actually got hot because that first moto was ridiculous. That first moto was the gnarliest moto of the year for me."



profile

Whipping it comes easy to the West Coast champ



DBR: I agree. I was burning up just standing around shooting, so it was definitely hot.

ET: "And then Blake was just at a good pace so he just kind of crept back away from me once I caught up to him."

DBR: He got around Barcia and then you got sort of hung up behind Barcia for a while...

ET: "Yeah. That's when he pulled that little gap. So then I had to find my way up the back."

DBR: But it wasn't Barcia that messed you up? You sort of just blew yourself up because of the heat a little bit?

ET: "Yeah. You could blame a little bit of both because I was wasting energy trying to get past Barcia – that's how important starts are."

DBR: Obviously he led the first motos early and then the second one the whole way which made it way easier for him...

ET: "Yeah. If you get good starts you save so much energy."

DBR: Are you doing the Monster Energy Cup on a 450 again?

ET: "Yeah, for sure."

DBR: Does that help you at all to ride that sort of a track on a 450? Does that help you when you get back on a 250F in any way?

ET: "I love riding my 450. I always ride my 450, like, half the days I was riding this summer. I've been riding one for the past year pretty consistently at home. I'm definitely ready to race."

DBR: So, is there a chance that you'll race it in 2013 Outdoors or something?

ET: "Yeah, I could have the option to do that. We're trying to get that figured out right now to see if everything works out with the team. It could be a possibility."

DBR: And are you going to be defending your supercross title?

ET: "Yeah. I'll be doing the West series for sure and wearing the #1 plate."

JACK THE RIPPER!

It has been a great season for many of Britain's up-and-coming young enduro riders including MPS Racing Husqvarna's motocross-to-enduro convert Jack Rowland...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media

Jack Rowland is one of British enduros rising stars. In two short seasons the just-turned 20 year old has risen straight to the top of the ranks. And in an era where Britain is regarded as a hotbed of young enduro talent, that's pretty impressive. A former schoolboy motocross star, Rowland turned his attention to enduro after he was offered a ride with MPS Racing in 2011. Since then he hasn't looked back. In his debut season he clinched his first championship topping the BEC Expert E1 four-stroke class before capping the year off with British Junior Trophy team selection for the ISDE in Finland.

Stepping up to the premier Championship class of the British Enduro Championship for 2012, Jack's continued to perform above and beyond all expectations. Third overall in European Enduro Championship with four podium results to his credit, Jack's recent performances in Germany ensured team GB's juniors secured second at this year's six days.

Adding the E1 four-stroke BEC title to his overseas accomplishments it's easy to see that 2012 has been a quite a year for Jack...

DBR: Where did it all start – how did you get into enduro?

JR: "Like a lot of people I started racing motocross. From the age of about six I worked my way through the youth classes. I was enjoying it

and things were beginning to go well. Then in 2009 I entered the adult ranks and raced the MX2 class in the Maxxis British Motocross Championship. The first two rounds were good but at round three I crashed heavily and broke my leg.

"I was only 17 at the time and after being laid up all summer I decided to try the Dirt 3-2-1 event for a bit of a laugh. Mick Seward of MPS Racing was there and he asked me to try one of their team bikes. I hadn't thought about enduro at the point but straight away I knew that was what I wanted to do. Since then I haven't looked back."

DBR: With no prior experience in enduro what's been the hardest thing to learn?

JR: "Learning how to judge the terrain. It might sound stupid but not all types of mud are the same. Sometimes you think there's grip and the next you're sliding down the track on your ear. To begin with I was too aggressive and I tried to go too fast in the wrong places – especially on exposed tree roots. I crashed a lot during 2011 and it took me a while to smooth out."

DBR: Even with your mistakes you showed a lot of potential in your first season, winning the BEC Expert E1 four-stroke class. Did that early success come as a surprise?

JR: "I didn't really know what to expect at the start of the 2011. It was only my first year in enduro so I didn't really have any major goals to achieve. To be honest winning the Expert E1 four-stroke title did come

as a surprise. I had some good rides but some equally shocking ones as well. Round two in Harwood was only my second enduro but it was one of the worst I've ever ridden. It was mile after mile of deep, deep bog. I'd never ridden anything like that and spent most of the weekend getting stuck. But overall I managed to get better as the year went on and thankfully it came good in the end."

DBR: You hit the ground running in 2012 establishing yourself as one of the top up-and-coming young riders in the UK. What did you work on during the winter to improve?

JR: "I always knew I had the speed but I lacked consistency. Like I said, I crashed a lot and wasn't able to string a run of solid results together. I knew stepping up into the Championship class that I couldn't afford to ride like that so I've worked on becoming a smoother rider. I think that's helped make a difference and as I've gained more experience I've improved my riding. I'm starting to ride special tests more like an enduro rider with sweeping lines in the corners and not stop-start like motocross."

DBR: You've coped well with the transition but as a rookie are you surprised with how you've progressed in the BEC?

JR: "Overall this season has been a major step forward and both the BEC and the BSEC have contributed a lot to my success. In the BEC I knew I had a chance of pushing for a podium position but had never really considered winning it. There >>



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SEWARD'S SAY!

A word with the MPS team boss...

Like a lot of riders, Jack has found his way into enduro with the help of MPS Racing. A long time supporter of encouraging and developing the youth of the sport Rowland has been working under Mick Seward's MPS Racing awning with Husqvarna backing for the past two years.

"We're always on the look out for new talent," says Mick when asked how he and Jack met. "I try to give the lesser known riders with potential a chance in enduro instead of just picking from the already established list of riders."

"I'd told a friend we were on the look out for a new rider and Jack's name was mentioned. We met at the Dirt 3-2-1 event a few years ago and asked him to try our bike. A deal was done almost straight away."

"Immediately it was easy to see he had raw potential – it just needed nurturing. Last year he was inexperienced and crashed a lot as a result of trying too hard but this year he's transformed into a different rider. Watching his race at the ISDE in Germany really showed that. He was so professional all week. He rode fast but was equally smart and didn't make any schoolboy errors. It was a proud moment to see how far he's come in two years. Winning the BEC E1 four-stroke title caps a fantastic season."

"We're already excited about next year and the team that we'll have. Husqvarna are 100 per cent behind us again and we've been able to bring Alex Rockwell back under our awning again. I truly believe that next year we'll have one of the strongest teams in the paddock. Both riders are capable of winning British championships and both are hungry for European success too. It's going to be an exciting 2013!"

are a lot of talented riders in it and I knew it would be tough. But at the penultimate round – the Natterjack Enduro – I was able to step my game up.

"Entering that race I had to try and beat Paul Edmondson if I wanted a chance of winning the title so I went there to win. The conditions suited me and I was able to win both days while on day two I finished second overall to Tom Sagar in the overall. Beating Paul was a big step forward. I know he's in his 40s but he's a multi world champion and when he sets his mind on winning he's usually very hard to beat. At the Natterjack he was racing to win so it meant a lot to beat him."

DBR: At the final round of the series you clinched the title. That must mean a lot to you?

JR: "It definitely does. Not just to me but everyone involved in the MPS Racing Husqvarna team. The hard work was done at the penultimate round – the Natterjack. It's been a year of highs and lows but everything worked out well in the end. I got wire in my rear wheel on the first day of the series which was disappointing, and then I wasn't really on the pace at round two. The second half of the year has been much better. So, yeah, it means a lot to have won."

DBR: Along with the BEC you've also had a good season in the BSEC. Were you pleased to have finished fourth overall in the highly competitive Under 23 class?

JR: "The British Sprint Enduro series has been really competitive but that's because the guys I'm racing against are some of the best junior riders in the world and they're all on bigger bikes too."

Racing against Danny McCanney, Alex Rockwell and Jonny Walker has helped me improve as I needed to ride on my limit to stay close to them. But other times it's been frustrating. I just didn't have their straight-line speed being on a smaller bike.

"I'm happy about the season – knowing I was the next best rider to them. I think if they weren't there and I was winning easily I probably wouldn't have tried so hard. To know you are on a similar pace to that of McCanney – who's won EWC races – is a good confidence boost for racing abroad."

DBR: Speaking of which you transferred your speed and determination into the European Enduro Championship this year. Did you enjoy the international events you entered?

JR: "Definitely. I went there with a lot of confidence and to finish the championship third overall in the E1 Junior class was a solid result for me. I really enjoyed the European Enduro Championship but I did have some bad luck. I don't know why but day one was always my worst result and I seemed to bounce back the following day."

"On day one at the first round in Italy I crashed on the first special test and spent the rest of the day playing catch up but finished third on day two. At the second round I had a massive toothache and struggle to see properly but the following day I rode a lot better and placed second in class."

"On day one at round three in Estonia I was really sick with food poisoning but managed to finish in second on day two. I think the final round was the only one where everything went well. It was a good series and to end it on the podium – only five points behind second place was really good."

DBR: Based on your results in the EEC, >>



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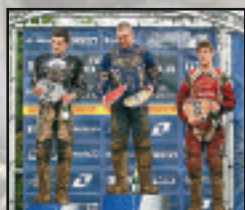
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JACK KNOWS...

He wants to be European champ!

"I'll be giving it 100 per cent to win the European Enduro Championship next year. Coming into 2012 I didn't know where I'd fit in and even with some bad results I still finished third overall. Next year I want to win it."

He has no regrets

"I don't regret quitting motocross one bit. I know I had the speed to finish well in MX2 but it's so hard to get decent support in motocross. Mick offered me a fantastic opportunity and I knew I had to take it. I've no regrets."

That Fast Eddy is fast

"One of my best rides to date was beating Paul Edmondson at the penultimate round of the BEC. He might be in his 40s but he's still one of the fastest guys in Britain and when he wants to win he's so hard to beat. He was riding for the win at the Natterjack so to beat him was a big accomplishment for me."

What it's like to lead the world

"We didn't know we were leading the ISDE at the end of day two until we got back to the hotel that night. When we logged onto the results and saw Great Britain pop up as leaders we all practically danced around the hotel foyer. It was crazy, hopefully next year it will read the same at the end of day six!"



Nailing ruts and kicking butts



Supermoto style at the ISDE



BEC and the BSEC you were selected for the British Junior World Trophy team for this year's ISDE in Germany. Were you pleased to get the call?

JR: "Yeah, I knew I was fast enough to get selected but it's not until you get the call to say you're picked that you know for sure. After last year – when I failed to finish – I really wanted to get back there again and prove myself."

DBR: What actually happened last year?

JR: "On day three I began to lose power. It turned out that one of the valves was faulty. As the day wore on it got progressively worse and I was forced to stop. There was nothing I could do to fix it. I was so gutted about it – the ISDE in Finland was the biggest race of my life and I didn't finish. But looking back now with Danny also having problems of his own on day one, my results helped to keep us in the race so I'm glad that in some way I was able to contribute to our podium result."

DBR: After the podium result in Finland was

there pressure to repeat that result in Germany?

JR: "There was a bit of hype about us but never any pressure from our team manager. The only pressure came from us. We wanted to improve and I knew I needed to step up as well. On day one I just tried to settle into the race. The enduro test was very tricky and a lot of riders crashed out of the event there. I played it safe and then pushed as hard as I could on the cross test. As the week went on I began to get more comfortable and upped my pace. Finishing second overall with the team was a fantastic way to end the week. I think we've showed we're as fast as anybody."

DBR: What are your plans for 2013 and how will you improve on the successes you've enjoyed this year?

JR: "Next year I'm staying with MPS Racing and with Husqvarna. I'm really happy with the team and don't need to look anywhere else. I haven't really thought about next year but truthfully I want to win a European title. I had some bad days this year and I still came close. I know I can win it."



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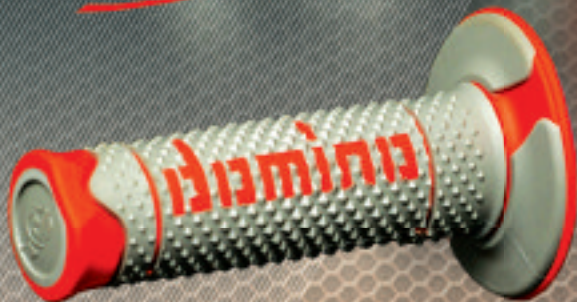
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RUI GONCALVES

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RUI GONCALVES ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS...

Words by JP O'Connell Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

Q: Is it true that you are fluent in seven languages and is there a job as a translator waiting at the end of your motocross career?

Alan Finch, Newport

A: "Well it's not actually seven – it's only five that I can speak really well. I can speak English, Italian, Flemish, French and of course my own language Portuguese. I don't really know to be honest, at the moment my focus is on motocross and later on I don't know, maybe there will be a job doing that but at the moment I am totally concentrating on my motocross."

Q: The transition from MX2 to MX1 wasn't an easy one for you, in hindsight would you have stayed in MX2 another year before moving up?

Rich Bennett, Chard

A: "Yes I'd say probably yes. I would probably stay another year and give it another try. I was vice champion in 2009 and I still wasn't very old so I think I could have stayed another year. I moved up to MX1 and then had an injury during the winter so couldn't really start the way that I wanted to but 2011 did get a bit better for me."

Q: Is there a more homely feel at the Honda World Motocross team than there was at KTM?

Andy Fletcher, Guildford

A: "I can't say it's better or worse really – they're both professional teams, two factory teams with great support. We're all here to win and that was the goal at KTM and that's the goal here at Honda. I had a good relationship with the KTM family in the past and at the moment I have a really good relationship with Honda. I honestly can say that I have had no bad times with any team."

Q: How disappointed were you when KTM decided to let you go after only one season on the MX1 bike?

Nigel McCartney, Leeds

A: "There was no budget for me that year as the other two guys – Tony and Max – had their contracts signed and I was at the end of mine. KTM decided to have only two riders, I talked with Stefan and Pit and basically they said there just wasn't a big enough budget. I mean obviously I was disappointed because I would have liked to have stayed another year to do a full season as I'd missed the first three GPs due to injury. I mean that's life and you have to move on, carry on with your racing and focus on the future."

Q: After last season's success results seem a bit harder to come by this year – why do you think that is?

Colin Dewar, Huddersfield

A: "I have had a little bit of bad luck this year. At the start of the season I had an injury in the winter that kept me off the bike for a month and I couldn't do my own programme. It was difficult as I couldn't focus 100 per cent on my racing and then at the beginning of the race season I got another three injuries – my thumb, I broke a tendon on my hip and broke my rib. At the moment things are going better and I hope they keep going that way."

Q: Have you enjoyed helping to develop the Honda and are you already signed for next season?

Justin Chorley, Pudsey

A: "It was great to help develop the Honda, it was the first year that it was a prototype bike and it was good to go to Japan for the first time, develop it and get better and better on it. Together with the team and the engineers we did a good job. I don't have a deal yet for next year so we'll have to see what comes, all I can do is focus on myself and do my best every weekend."

Q: Do you still think it's possible to land a world championship before you retire?

Brett Palmer, Oldham

A: "Well that's what I work for – that's what my dream is. I finished second in the world before and that's what I work towards every day, that's what I work for and as long as I can keep healthy and racing at my best then for sure a world championship is the goal. Obviously we're talking world championship and not national championship so it takes an incredible amount of effort and everything needs to go good and all the parts need to come together."

Q: If it was for a GP win would you take Bobby down in the last corner?

Tony Chestnut, Clydebank

A: "Hmmm, for a GP win I don't know. I'd maybe not put him down but I'd do pretty much anything to try and pass. Obviously we are team-mates and we have respect on the track for each other – it's not about putting someone down it's about when to get aggressive and when to get it done!"

Q: Describe how special it felt to win your home GP back in 2009...

Jamie Dyer, Wintham

A: "It was great and is probably one of the highlights of my career. Winning my home GP was great, you know the crowd was going crazy and I just felt so special and so good. You work so hard and you want to put it together. I'd won the GP the weekend before in Valkenswaard – my first GP ever – and then straight

after I won at home so it was just something special with all the people shouting and happy to see me win."

Q: If it were all to end tomorrow would you be happy with what you've achieved in motocross?

Nathan Stone, Widnes

A: "I can be proud of what I have done in the past – I mean I want to achieve more but I am proud of what I have already managed. I've been racing GPs for 11 years – I started really young and I've built it up every year so yes I'm happy."

Q: If you could change one decision you've made in your career what would it be?

Bill Walker, Tamworth

A: "Hmmm I don't know, nothing really springs to mind as everything has pretty much gone to plan so I don't think I'd change any decision I've made."

Q: What is the significance of your 999 and Bobrysthev's 777?

Rachel Parry, Llanelli

A: "I don't know about the 777 but 999 was my first number when I went into the pro class. Back in Portugal I was running #1 in the 85 class and then when I moved up to the 125s I just didn't know what to go for. My mechanic suggested that 999 was a pretty cool number and when we put it on the bike it looked good so we decided to do it. When I switched back to Honda last year I decided that I wanted to get that number back as it reminded me of the old days. I like it and now I'm going to keep it."

Q: How much has the Honda improved in the time you have been with the team and in what areas?

Brendan Thomas, Arbroath

A: "The team has done a great job and the bike has really improved in the last year – we receive more factory support, we went to Japan to test special parts and definitely this year having the prototype bike has been really special. Working directly with Japan has been fantastic. My job was to help improve the bike and I think I've done well at that but none of that would be possible without the team or without Honda. I think that as a team, as a bike and as a rider we made improvements and that was the ultimate goal."

Q: As well as the GPs do you ride in the Italian national championships?

Ian Snook, Kettering

A: "We rode the Italian nationals last year but not this time – it was a joint decision not to do them made between the team and I. It's just too many races."

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ROSSI BEARD'S READY TO RIP IT UP IN THE UPCOMING EVENTS 22 ARENACROSS SERIES...

Considered to be a bit of a sand specialist following his solid race results at FatCat and Hawkstone Park this season, northern 65cc speedster Rossi Beard is equally adept racing indoors too and should be a force to be reckoned with in the upcoming Events 22 Arenacross series...

Rage: First off Rossi, tell us a little bit about your background – how long have you been riding and racing and how did you start? And is there a family tradition of motocross?

RB: "I've been riding since I was three years old and started racing at six. My dad built me a track as we live in a farming area. It was great because I could ride as much as I wanted. Dad loved taking me and teaching me new things. After starting racing I then started to go to new tracks – Preston Docks, Leisure Lakes, Ribchester and others. In my first year, age six, I won the Newton-le-Willows club championship on my auto. My dad – known as 'Nanbo #10' – did some motocross/scrambling in his teens and even raced against DT at Hawkstone. Then later in his life he raced superbikes and powerbikes and became Ace of Aintree Champion."

Rage: You're not 10 until next month but this year you showed you're capable of running with the fastest two 11-year-olds in the country. The age gap must be a big disadvantage when you're so young...

RB: "It is a bit of a disadvantage as I'm not as strong or tall as them but I've loved the

experience of riding with them and winning my first Red Bull Elite Youth Cup race against them at FatCat boosted my confidence and made me realise I can be up there with the best."

Rage: What's been the highlight of your 2012 season?

RB: "Winning my first Red Bull Elite Youth Cup race at FatCat and winning my first Red Bull Elite Youth Cup overall at Hawkstone."

Rage: How did you get to become so fast, so young in the sand? We're assuming the going at Preston Docks might have something to do with it?

RB: "I love riding in the sand and at Preston Docks it can be a really rough track to ride but I think the real reason I won at Hawkstone is because I love the track and really enjoyed racing there."

Rage: What experience do you have of racing indoors and how do you fancy your chances in the New Year's Arenacross series?

RB: "I raced my auto in the supercross series and finished second overall after winning at Liverpool Echo Arena. I raced my 65 in last year's series and despite having a bad round in Belfast had good results in the other two rounds. It's quite a big thing racing in front of the crowds and being so young. It makes me nervous but I am getting less nervous every time. I'm looking forward to this year's Arenacross and hoping to win!"

Rage: You're a member of the Red Bull Elite Youth Academy – how has training with DT, Elliott and Jake helped you?

RB: "It's been really exciting and I have learnt so much from Dave, Elliott and Jake. They are great at teaching and have lots of experience and tips to share with us. I really appreciate all their help."

Rage: Your dad's rocking a bit of a Graham Noyce haircut but who's your favourite rider?

RB: "Dad loved watching Graham at Cuerdon Park and says it's a good job you said he's still rocking! I have a lot of favourite riders but I think Ryan Dungey is my most favourite."

Rage: It's early days yet but can you see yourself ever turning pro?

RB: "That would be my ultimate dream to become pro and be one of the best."

Rage: What's your ultimate ambition as far as motocross is concerned?

RB: "To become world champion!"

Rage: Anyone you'd like to thank?

RB: "I would like especially to thank my trainer Danny Tollet (NMA) – dad asked him to become part of my future and to continue to train, teach and support me. Also I would like to thank Dave Clarke Racing, Putoline, Michelin, Bespoke Spas, RSS, Preston Docks MX and Dirt Bike Rider magazine for their continued help and support. And a thank you to all my family especially mum and Graham Noyce!"



Rossi Beard's race season has been nothing short of stunning





Liam Garland's been the lad to beat all year long

NATIONAL EXPRESS!

THE BRITISH YOUTH NATIONALS FINISH WITH A FLOURISH AT CUSSES GORSE...

It's been a tough old year for the British Youth Nationals as the promotional team had to deal with one of the wettest summers on record as well as a mid-season date clash that led to some riders defecting. Those issues along with disappointingly low start line numbers made for a truly tricky birth.

Despite all of this the common paddock opinion is that organisers RHL have delivered well and gained much respect in the process. In 2013, further impetuosity is badly needed if the old magic is to be restored.

The rumour mill would suggest there's no lack of thought being tossed around at ACU Towers on the subject. A French Connection where reciprocal nationals would be held here and in France is one suggestion, a full team of riders being supported for UEM qualifiers with an RHL truck transporting the bikes is another and possibly even an experimental round of BYN action on the Maxxis card is also possible – all ideas to reinvigorate what is still the official British Youth championship. Some solid

announcements along with dates and venues will hopefully surface at the Dirt Bike Show or shortly afterwards.

This year's BYN series wrapped at Cusses Gorse with Louie Kessell lifting the Auto crown, very much as expected. But with four weekend heat wins on his card – Charlie Heyman once again served notice that he most definitely has a future in the sport.

In the 65s young French flier Mattheo Miot scooped the overall win. Mattheo's success was born out of consistency but he still claimed a single race victory as did champion Gary Ashley – the other three race wins going to super slick Rossi Beard. Such was their points advantage Kessell and Ashley only needed to stay consistent as did Taylor Hammal in the small-wheels. Taylor however went out in blaze of glory with an overall victory to take the title by nailing the final three race wins. Albie Wilkie with two race wins powered on impressively at times but he had to settle for second overall and championship silver too. Jed Etchells with a

cracking little show snatched the meeting and more importantly series bronze relegating Alexander Brown down to series fourth in the process.

The Biggies kicked off with just four points separating Robert Yates and series leader Josh Coleman. Jay Hague was 19 points behind and also in with an outside shout. At the close of play Hague claimed third overall but not enough points to challenge the front two. Yates scored a brace of heat wins and took first overall, but tantalisingly he was just one point short of ultimate glory. Coleman with a final race win did exactly what he had to – taking the crown by the smallest of margins in the best way possible.

Liam Garland looked well tasty earlier in the year sporting Kawasaki green but ever since going orange with a Pope KTM I swear he's even quicker! There was no stopping him at Cusses as he went five from five to become British Youth Open champion with Jack Kelly finishing as series runner-up. In total Garland nailed 17 heat wins from 25 races run.

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

AUTOS

1	Louie Kessell	981
2	Charlie Heyman	952
3	Bobby Bruce	933
4	Kyle Peel	804
5	Benjamin Clark	619

65cc

1	Gary Ashley	1206
2	Max Ingham	1053
3	Troy Anderson	944
4	Reece Martin	842
5	Buster Hart	838

SW85cc

1	Taylor Hammal	1241
2	Albie Wilkie	1163
3	Jed Etchells	1059
4	Alexander Brown	1049
5	Tom Hume	982

BW85cc

1	Josh Coleman	991
2	Robert Yates	990
3	Jay Hague	967
4	Will Keogh	906
5	Sam Braithwaite	763

OPEN

1	Liam Garland	1076
2	Jack Kelly	918
3	Adam Darbyshire	899
4	Aaron Pipon	899
5	Alex Meadows	879



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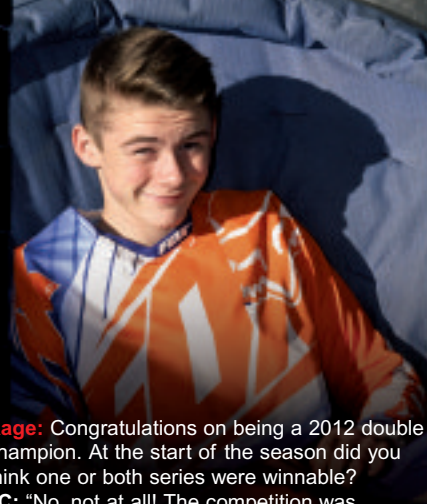
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It was a close run thing but Josh Coleman sealed the deal at Cusses Gorse



Rage: Congratulations on being a 2012 double champion. At the start of the season did you think one or both series were winnable?

JC: "No, not at all! The competition was really strong in both championships at the start of this season."

Rage: Which series win gave you more satisfaction and why?

JC: "It has to be the GT Cup because the chance was there to win a ride on a new KTM for 2013 donated by KTM UK. For me the best part of winning the BYN is the recognition it gives you."

Rage: Do you have any early plans for next season – have you provisionally registered with any series for 2013?

JC: "I'm making the move up to 125 class next season and I have been asked by Trevor Pope to join his team at Pope Racing for 2013. I would like to do some racing in Europe next year and after winning the GT Cup this season I have automatically been registered for the GT Cup 2013 in the 125 class."

Rage: Which was your favourite race of the year and which one sticks out as the toughest?

JC: "My favourite race was the last race of the GT Cup series at Mallory Park because that's when I knew that I had the championship in the bag!"

"The toughest race for me has to be the last race of the BYN series at Cusses Gorse because I knew I had to win it to take the championship. The pressure was on knowing I had to get the start right because Rob was so close on points."

Rage: Could the season possibly have gone any better – were there any low points at all?

JC: "Things could have gone better for me in the BYN series because it all became so close on points and it was down to that final race. The problem I had all season really was getting the starts and with the tracks we were riding, passing was difficult so the starts were crucial in every race."

"The lowest point was at the BYN series came at FatCat Motoparc because I injured my knee pretty bad in a crash at the start of qualifying. Then having to ride five long races with the injury was painful!"

Rage: Is there anyone you'd like to thank?

JC: "I would like to thank Claudio at Golden Tyre and Simon at LRS Suspension for all the help they have given throughout the year. And I can't forget mum for her continuous support and organizing and especially my dad for the great job he does maintaining my bikes."

Rage: And finally, tell us an unusual thing about you or a little known fact?

JC: "I have a 26-year-old brother called Jimmy who only started MX at the age of 22!"

SPOTLIGHT ON...

JOSH COLEMAN #66

DOB: 12/09/97 HOMETOWN: FAREHAM, HAMPSHIRE SPONSORS: LRS SUSPENSION AND GOLDEN TYRE

This year has thrown up four double national champions – Louie Kessell (BYN and BSMA Autos), Gary Ashley (BYN and BSMA 65s), Josh Gilbert (EYC and Maxxis BW85) and Josh Coleman (BYN and BSMA BW85). Surely the performance of Coleman is the most remarkable because Kessell, Ashley and Gilbert were all pre-season favourites but Coleman's season-long outstanding run is the stuff of a true unsung hero.

The BSMA title was won with a raft of heat wins and four overall round victories while the BYN crown was more a reward for gutsy consistency allied with speed, determination and application. Looking back at Josh's career though you'll see it's peppered with outstanding results so perhaps the success of this term was always on the cards.

Josh began his racing days with Portsmouth MXC in 2003 but by the end of 2008 he'd elevated himself to a seventh place overall finish in the EYC 65cc series. As a small-wheel 85cc runner he won the 2010 Weston Beach Race and also finishing top of the pile at that year's Canada Heights International. Another seventh place overall finish in the Red Bull series and his very first national heat win at the Cusses Gorse BYMX finale also came his way in '10 – that race victory made all the sweeter as it happened to be his 13th birthday!

Last term Josh finished as big-wheel runner-up in the BSMA GT Cup championship so he must have really fancied his chances this time around. I put this question to Josh first just a couple of days following the nerve jangling BYN season closer at Cusses.

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK



Red Bull KTM **KTM 250SX-F**

RIDER: JEFFREY HERLINGS #84

Factory prepared KTM 250SX-Fs have won the last five MX2 world championship titles with the help of fully committed throttle-twisters Tyla Rattray, Marvin Musquin, Ken Roczen and most recently of all and the man that this bike belongs to – Jeffrey Herlings. While Herlings' abilities are mind blowing the technical advantage that the quarter-litre KTMs seem to have over the other manufacturers' factory 250Fs is even more so.

But what actually makes this bike so good? The truthful answer is we're not all that sure because only a select few team technicians know exactly what's going on inside the engine and how the ignition and fuel maps are programmed. There are some things that just can't be hidden though

like the XTRIG clamps, Renthal bars and sprockets, Regina chain and Akrapovic exhaust. Factory Brembo brakes systems are matched with Moto-Master disks and SBS pads to slow the thing down while factory WP suspension keeps the ride balanced and the factory Pirellis hooking up.

So while some of the technologies used on this bike are readily available from your local dirt bike dealer the majority of things that really make this bike stand out actually aren't. The good news is the lessons learned by the KTM Racing teams do eventually filter down to the production models so maybe in a year or so we'll all have the option of riding a 250F that's as fast as this one. It's just a shame 99.9 per cent of us don't have the talent to actually push it to the limit...



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RING STING!

Rob Warner brings us all the best action from the 2012 X-Fighters World Tour while Bry Mac travels to Italy to see just how good the factory KTMs really are. Meanwhile, Geoff Walker gets to grips with Jonny Walker's extreme weapon and we go behind the scenes at Bercy...



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